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# *Of Bellies and Books*

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(Re)Positioning the Subject within the  
Education/Pregnancy Nexus in Mozambique

Francesca Salvi

Thesis submitted for PhD examination

at the University of Sussex

June 2014

## Declaration

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not, and will not be, submitted in whole or part to another university for the award of any other degree.

Signature .....

## Acknowledgements

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This thesis seals a journey. Geographically, between Europe and Mozambique. Institutionally, between the Institute of Education and the University of Sussex. Theoretically, between a positivistic to a more postmodern positioning of myself. This study has been a constant throughout these movements, and I wish I managed to convey how meaningful this journey has been to me.

Although I wrote it up, many minds are behind this work. And many people sustained me through it. To them goes my *thank you*.

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UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Francesca Salvi, Doctor of Philosophy

Of Bellies and Books: (Re)Positioning the Subject within the Education/Pregnancy  
Nexus in Mozambique

‘Of Bellies and Books’ refers to pregnancy and formal education, constructed as mutually exclusive processes. This thesis explores that opposition by tracing the confluence of discourses through which it is produced. In so doing, it dissolves dichotomies and proposes a shift to the subject as both constituted by and constituting of discourses.

Both academic research and global and national social policy construct teenage pregnancy as problematic. This is heightened in development contexts, where in-school pregnancy triggers Malthusian fears of overpopulation and consequential poverty increase. Conversely, formal education and training are represented as a means to personal development and success, through acquiring knowledge and skills leading to formal employment and individual empowerment. In this sense, schooling is constructed as a symbol of - or entrance to - modernity, while pregnancy and parenthood are defined in terms of the opportunities they prevent. From this perspective, in-school pregnancy works against individual and social progress and is synonymous with backwardness and tradition within a modernising and globalised world.

Exploring in-school pregnancy in this thesis becomes a means through which to revoke the binary symbolised by tradition and modernity which produces a deficit view of the pregnant schoolgirl. Within this context, the study has been driven by the following research questions:

- How do education policy and practice frame in-school pregnancy in Mozambique?
- How do families interpret and regulate in-school pregnancy?

- How do young people – young women – navigate the available discourses in the performance of their identities?

Stimulated by a desire to explore the national policy tackling in-school pregnancy indicating that pregnant schoolgirls should be transferred to night courses, the empirical data collection took place within 10 months in and around the capital Maputo. It entailed documentary analysis, interviews with 10 Ministry of Education officials, 20 school teachers and 33 young people (25 girls and 8 men/boys) in and out of education. Through the generation and analysis of data, I develop a nuanced interpretation of the discourses that construct and regulate in-school pregnancy within schools and families.

Within the institutional space of schools, a textual analysis of the policy shows how language borrowed from the biomedical and legal fields is directed towards the production of in-school pregnancy as unwanted, unplanned and ultimately ‘wrong’. This normalises the difference between pregnant and non-pregnant schoolgirls, producing transfer to night courses as a rational strategy to tackle in-school pregnancy. Although understood as a means to bridge the gender gap in education by tackling one of the main causes of female dropout, the current policy acts *de facto* as a highway to dropout, thereby reproducing gender exclusion.

Within families, pregnancy initiates the complex procedure of family formation by drawing on the mutually exclusive categories of childhood and adulthood and symbolising the transition between the two. I contend that these two spaces, schools and families, often associated by research participants with modernity and tradition respectively, are not stable and homogenous constructs, but offer shifting and contingent sets of norms which are both conflicting and intersecting.

By engaging with young people's narratives, I argue that pregnant schoolgirls, while being constructed by discursive norms, also resist and react to them. At school, young pregnant females enact a number of strategies to resist transfer to night courses. At home, they resist family formation and find ways to combine their multiple identities. By drawing on this, I ultimately contend that young pregnant schoolgirls navigate different regulatory frameworks in the production of their identities. This means that the itineraries they construct in crossing boundaries within normative frameworks constitute their identities and reposition them as *travellers*.

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## List of Acronyms

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ABC	Abstinence, Be Faithful, Condoms
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DECM	Direção da Educação da Cidade de Maputo (Education Directorate of the City of Maputo)
EP	Ensino Primario (Primary School)
ESG	Ensino Secundario Geral (Secondary School)
FASE	Fundo de Apoio ao Sector da Educação (Education Sector Support Fund)
FRELIMO:	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Liberation Front of Mozambique)
GAD	Gender and Development
GFR	Global Fertility Rate
GTAT	Grupo de Trabalho de Assuntos Transversais (Intersectoral Working Group)
MCP	Multiple Concurrent Partnership
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey
MINED	Ministério da Educação (Ministry of Education)
OMM	Organização das Mulheres Moçambicanas (Mozambican Women Organisation)
RDS	Respondent-Driven Sample
RENAMO	Resistencia Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambique National Resistance)
SWAP	Sector-Wide Approach
UEM	Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (Eduardo Mondlane University)
UP	Universidade Pedagógica (Pedagogic University)
WHO	World Health Organisation
WID	Women in Development



## List of Portuguese Terms

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Apresentação	Introduction: First step of wedding ceremonies
Assimilado	Indigenous person who has been formally integrated within the Portuguese colonial community
Bairro	Neighbourhood area
bicho de sete cabezas	Mythical animal with seven heads: metaphor to describe complexity
Casamento	Wedding: Third and last step of wedding ceremonies
Changana/Xangana/Shangaan	Local dialect
Chapa	Semi-public form of local transport
Curandeirismo/Curandeiro	Traditional healing/healer
Direção da Educação	Education Directorate: intermediate level, liaison between Maputo's central offices of the Ministry of Education, and local district services
Diretor Pedagógico	Director of Pedagogy: Figures that liaise between headteachers and other teachers, they are usually teachers with extended remits. These concern the smooth running of courses, and entail a closer relationship with pupils.
Dono da gravidez	Author/Owner of the pregnancy
Feitiçaria	Witchcraft
Golpe da barriga	Belly coup: rhetorical figure to refer to pregnancy as a strategy girls pursue in order to get financial support from their partners
Homen Novo	'New Man', based on the modern ideals of scientific socialism, literacy, equality, and the rejection of superstition
Indigenato	Racial system distinguishing natives from non-natives
Lobolo	Brideprice: Second step of wedding ceremonies
Luta armada	Armed struggle
Machamba	Vegetable plot
Mãe	Mother
Mato	Woods
Namorado/a	Boyfriend/Girlfriend
Pito/a	Partner for sexual pleasure which may entail limited economic exchange
Regulo	Traditional leader, system of indirect rule maintained by the Portuguese colonisers in order to enforce Portuguese law.

Sengue	Usually older partner who can support girls financially in exchange for a sexual relationship
Serviços Distretuais	District Services: local branch of the Ministry of Education

# 1. Introduction

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*I do not believe that every girl wants to leave school as soon as she gets pregnant. Yet, it is very difficult to stay put when the system encourages you to leave and go home. I think the context in which the pregnancy occurs is very important. A healthy environment would not cast any shame on pregnant girls, so she would not have the urge to leave and hide from her peers. I think a pregnancy cannot be considered negative or wrong. What is negative is the discrimination within the school. What I want to say is, it is not pregnancy that discriminates, but the school. (Zara, 19, individual interview, Maputo)*

Zara was a 19-year-old single mother to Clayton, who was 7 months old at the time of this interview. Zara's boyfriend left her upon finding out that she was pregnant, claiming that he was not responsible for her pregnancy. He was not contributing, financially, socially or emotionally, to Clayton's upbringing. Zara was living with her parents, who agreed to share what they have with her and her son despite not being well off. Zara left school when she got pregnant. She was initially transferred to night courses<sup>1</sup>, but found it very hard to attend, mainly due to the long commute and her fears of the dangers of being out at night. When we arranged our interview, she had plucked up the courage to attend night classes whilst struggling to find a job.

Zara's story illuminates the contentious relationship between education and schooling on the one hand, and sex, pregnancy and parenthood on the other. These notions are often constructed in opposition to one another, rendering in-school pregnancy *conceptually* impossible. As I will argue in Chapter 3, in-school pregnancy is also at the core of another binary relationship - between discourses of tradition and 'backwardness' and modernisation and development.

These binary oppositions constitute a starting point for this thesis, which will be further discussed in Section 1.1 as part of the rationale. The section also introduces the key research questions underpinning the thesis. Section 1.2 acts as a *post-scriptum* to the study rationale by discussing existing terminology defining motherhood during

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<sup>1</sup> Transferring pregnant girls to night courses is a national policy since 2003 (Ministerial decree 39/GM/2003) and will be thoroughly considered in Chapter 5.

adolescence, and by motivating my choice to talk of ‘in-school pregnancy’. Section 1.3 concisely sets out my claim to knowledge, while in Section 1.4 I briefly introduce myself as the researcher, offering some insight into the mutually constituent relationship between the author and text. Finally Section 1.5 outlines the structure of the thesis, before making some final comments.

## 1.1 Study Rationale

Some scholars suggest that pregnancy may be traditionally valued and encouraged as a means for self-realisation, so that individuals achieve their main purpose of contributing to the continuation of their social group (Preston-Whyte & Zondi, 1989; Walker, 1995, 418). For this reason, sex and pregnancy are often considered important rites of passage that heavily contribute to defining women’s positions within their communities and thereby, their social identities. Modernisation perspectives tend to oppose this view, especially when pregnancy occurs as young people are investing in other forms of self-development, especially education and training. In this context, pregnancy is conceived as an obstacle to the education of girls. Overall, early pregnancy is depicted as an event that triggers a vicious cycle of dependency and deprivation, as the United Nations claimed in Cairo (1994):

*Motherhood at a very young age entails a risk of maternal death that is greater than average, and the children of younger mothers have higher levels of morbidity and mortality. Early childbearing continues to be an impediment to improvements in the educational, economic and social status of women in all parts of the world. Overall for young women, early marriage and early motherhood can severely curtail educational and employment opportunities and are likely to have a long term, adverse impact on their and their children’s quality of life.*

Pregnancy is thus constructed as a threat to education and to the production of the modernising subject. In particular, the concern expressed in this quote is not with the individual but with the economic productivity young people may forgo in becoming parents ‘too early’. In other words, this perspective is informed by a conceptualisation of the subject rooted in the Enlightenment and fostered by notions of modernity. Such a conceptualisation – further discussed in Chapter 3 - views individuals as functioning



according to a cost/benefit analysis and centralises ‘progress’ as framed in economic terms within development discourses.

Teenage pregnancy is seen as being among the main causes of school dropouts in sub-Saharan Africa (Chankseliani, 2008; Eloundou-Enyegue *et al.*, 2004; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999), where it accounts for approximately 18% of all female dropouts in secondary school and 7.3% in both secondary and primary school (Eloundou-Enyegue *et al.*, 2004, 3). Data are more pessimistic for Mozambique, where pregnancy accounts for 39.1% of the total dropouts in secondary schools and 9.0% at the primary level (Eloundou-Enyegue *et al.*, 2004). With a view to reducing the gender gap in education, national governments in most sub-Saharan African countries have developed policies aimed at discouraging in-school pregnancies. These policies can be associated to the commitment expressed through the ratification of various international agreements. As specified by article 10(f) of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (United Nations, 1979), countries should aim at:

*The reduction of female student dropout rates and the organisation of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely.*

Reflecting these concerns Mozambique has endorsed policy GM/39/2003, which indicates that pregnant girls should be transferred to night courses together with their partners, if in the same school. If their partners are members of the school staff, they should be made redundant and reported to the police. This policy figures as the first national attempt at regulating in-school pregnancy, although some confusion exists with regards to how strictly schools are required to observe its dictats, as I will discuss in Chapter 5. This measure was developed in an apparent effort to address in-school pregnancy as one of the main barriers to girls’ education. Yet this implies a logical chain in which tackling the main barriers to girls’ education - early pregnancy and marriage - will have the direct consequence of discouraging their occurrence thereby increasing the number of girls in education: one cause to one outcome. Despite these efforts, young people’s (under 20) contribution to the country’s global fertility rate remains high. This suggests a more complex and dynamic social scenario than the simplistic policy formulation would be adequately able to address.

Although figures from 1997 show that fertility had started to decline in Mozambique (Arnaldo, 2004), the latest Demographics and Health Survey (Ministerio da Saude (MISAU) *et al.*, 2013), shows that the fertility rate had started to rise again in 2011. Moreover, data on global fertility decline gloss over the nuances of such trends. According to the latest Demographic Health Survey (*ibid.*) the mean age at first child is just above 19, having recently decreased from 20.1 for women now aged between 45-49 to 18.7 for women now aged between 20-24. This change is also reflected in the high proportions of younger women who gave birth before turning 20. This corresponds to 49% of women now aged between 45-49, but surges to 66% for those between 20-24. This piece of information strengthens previous information presented by the *Inquérito Nacional Sobre Saúde Reprodutiva e Comportamento Sexual dos Jovens e Adolescentes* (INJAD) survey (INE, 2001), which suggested that women tend to have their first child earlier. This means that young people may provide interesting insights into Mozambican fertility trends, thus complementing theories of fertility decline with the quietened voices of a section of the population that has been largely absent or homogenised within country level data.

Another aspect of framing in-school pregnancy as a threat to ‘progress’ is its equation with unwanted pregnancy. The overlaps between in-school and unwanted pregnancies are also emphasised by Stewart & Eckert (1995, 12), who maintain that sex among young people tends to happen outside of wedlock. The implication here is that out-of-wedlock pregnancies are generally unwanted. Moreover, by occurring outside of the normative space of marriage, in-school pregnancies happen in a regulatory void (Mensch *et al.*, 2006, 700). Yet, Mensch *et al.* are *de facto* assuming the existence of only one regulatory framework, one that conceives of wantedness only within wedlock. This study challenges that position, and suggests first that some pregnancies may actually be wanted, and secondly that there may be different sets of norms at play. In this sense, teenage pregnancy can concurrently be at odds with one set, while resonating with others.

This possibility, theorised in Chapter 3 using the architecture of multiple modernities, is particularly relevant to the case of Mozambique due to its fragmented history. Mozambique was a Portuguese colony until 1975, after which 15 years of civil war ensued. A number of scholars (Finnegan, 1992; Hanlon, 1984; Mondlane, 1969) report that state building has been particularly difficult in Mozambique because of its lack of a

unified national identity. The absence of a clear sense of nationhood makes Mozambique an interesting choice when examining how the modern state has intervened in the controversial and private realm of sexual and reproductive behaviour and choices. The country also provides an interesting case within which to examine how individuals and groups perceive and react to state intervention in sexual and reproductive health choices and behaviours; spheres of practice which hitherto have been subject to more traditional forms of authority such as those exerted by family/community/society.

This thesis relies on fieldwork carried out prevalently in the urban areas of Maputo, Mozambique's capital and the country's most populous city. My focus on an extended urban setting in a country where the majority of the population lives in rural areas requires further elaboration. First, this work does not aim at providing generalisable information about young people across the country. It aims at discussing the implications of in-school pregnancy in a rapidly 'modernising' context. Although rural areas are also modernising, Maputo presented the best site, as its evolving social and economic conditions impact upon young people more than any other age group (Karlyn, 2005). Karlyn (4) contends:

*In Maputo, as elsewhere, changing social structures and the breakdown of the extended family has placed the responsibility for sex education on parents, despite strong cultural taboos against it. The controversy over how young people express their sexuality in Mozambique masks larger issues in intergenerational communication, with young people often viewing their parents as anti-modern traditionalists, increasing young people's desire for independence and freedom.*

Maputo is certainly a very interesting context – although not only for the reasons outlined by Karlyn. I argue further that among the points made by Karlyn, the implied dichotomy between tradition and modernity does not adequately frame individual behaviours and attitudes in relation to pregnancy and sexuality. Rather, instances of modernity and tradition interweave with one another, to the point that it would be of little use to try and distinguish one from the other.

Of particular relevance here, and as Mr Aurelio, an anthropologist from the Universidade Pedagógica in Maputo suggests, in-school pregnancy provokes various conflicts:

*I think there are a number of different conflicts between the various meanings attached to pregnancy. At the level of the Ministry of Education (MINED) there is the decree you already know about, which considers pregnancies as crimes. As such, it penalises men, in the case they are known, and also girls who get pregnant. At the level of families and communities, pregnancies are valued and recognised through the institute of early marriage and also in the case of an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, things are not as bleak as they are institutionally. Among young people, there is yet another meaning, and that is linked to sex, pleasure and so forth. In this sense, there is a very harsh conflict between the perspective of the MINED, which does not value pregnancies, that of families, who do, and that of young people, that consider it as an individual right.*

A study of in-school pregnancy allows the unpacking of a number of discourses, which are often connected to different regulatory frameworks that are not necessarily aligned with one another. For example, Zara's experience (reported at the beginning of this chapter) indicates that pregnancies do occur while girls are registered in school, but do not necessarily represent an end point in girl's educational trajectories. The plight of Zara, and many other girls in this situation, calls for an empirical and theoretical exploration of in-school pregnancy, aimed at unpacking the complexities implied within the relationship between pregnancy and formal education. In-school pregnancy, in other words, requires the development of an adequate conceptual vocabulary, which would render it intelligible and *possible* in its own right. With this in mind, the research questions develop as follows:

1. How do education policy and practice frame in-school pregnancy in Mozambique?
2. How do families interpret and regulate in-school pregnancy?
3. How do young people – young women – navigate the available discourses in the performance of their identities?

The ultimate aim of this thesis is to deconstruct the conceptual oppositions introduced in this section by focusing on the young people taking part in this study and the meanings they attach to pregnancy. Through the voices and experiences of research participants, I will argue that identity building is about the interweaving of multiple frameworks and cannot be conceptualised as unitary and homogeneous. Young people navigate different sets of discursive norms, and adjust them to their own circumstances, and towards what they hope to achieve for themselves in the present and for the future. By doing so, they constantly negotiate social meanings. This suggests that simple binary oppositions between traditional and modern are inadequate to frame meanings of pregnancy and that different discursive structures coexist in a situation which is better identified through the concept of multiple modernities (Eisenstadt, 2000).

In order to explore the itineraries individual young women construct, I have chosen to exclude literature on, and discussions of, gender violence, HIV and AIDS and transactional sex, among others. Although aware of the relevance of this literature for a study of in-school pregnancy, I opted for telling a particular story, one that makes space for agency (theorised in Section 3.3.2) and that allows me to consider in depth how pregnancy is discursively constructed. In doing this, I do not wish to negate the connections between pregnancy and, say, poverty and violence, or the implications of the violence that transfer to night course entails. Indeed I recognise that absence as well as presence produce the world (St. Pierre, 2000, 848), just as well as forms of ignorance are produced when knowledge is proffered (Pelletier, 2009). At the same time, I aim to contribute to a more positive strand of knowledge and research concerning young people and pregnancy.

## 1.2 A Note on Terminology

Previous research in this field has developed a variety of terminological constructs to refer to in-school pregnancies. This has contributed to a generalised lack of clarity. ‘Young mother’, ‘teenage mother’, ‘adolescent mother’, ‘children who have children’, ‘youthful pregnancy’, and ‘early pregnancy’ all connect pregnancy with a specific age – teenage – at which pregnancy is not deemed appropriate. Yet this presupposes that a thing such as adolescence factually exists (Macleod, 2003). Moreover, it presumes a certain degree of consensus over what adolescence refers to. On the contrary, I argue,

transitions between childhood and adulthood cannot be strictly defined by objective parameters, indicating that a single definition of adolescence does not exist.

A different criticism concerns the use of ‘early pregnancy’. Early in relation to what? Early for whom? This is similar to the inconsistencies connected with an ideal definition of adolescence, and in addition does not clarify whose perspective it is that deems it appropriate to have children. ‘Early’ seems therefore to identify a moral standpoint that carries the risk of biasing the analysis with a value judgement.

Terms such as ‘young mother’, ‘teenage mother’ and ‘adolescent mother’ all refer to the girls that become pregnant. This approach shifts the focus from the pregnancy to the subjects that experience it. Although recognising the individual behind the event, they do not necessarily recognise individual agency, nor do they provide a subtle understanding of the various subjects usually involved in a pregnancy. To avoid this, Fennell (2007) suggests a multilevel approach to sex and fertility which considers not only the positions of girls, but that of their partners, their family, friends and peers, their community and, at a macro level, the social and political context.

As a consequence of these considerations, this research will mainly rely on the use of the term in-school pregnancy<sup>2</sup>. This reduces the potential for value judgements and is free from age-specific concerns. Instead, it allows for the considerations of the intersections between education, pregnancy and parenthood, thus opening a different analytical domain. For example, it is within the context of modernisation and development that education takes on distinct extrinsic aims, while pregnancy and parenthood seem to be defined negatively in terms of what they prevent. In-school pregnancy is context-sensitive as it acknowledges and takes in the specific features of the Mozambican setting. Furthermore, to focus on the event of pregnancy allows a consideration of the context in which it occurs. This does not mean negating individual agency. On the contrary, it opens up possibilities to identify different individuals and social forces that play a role.

Another term that requires clarification is that of ‘girl’. Throughout this work I will often refer to pregnant schoolgirls or in-school mothers as girls, rather than females. I have chosen to do this for two reasons. The first is a personal dislike of the word

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<sup>2</sup> Other terms will sometimes be used in accordance with their source, and as they fit best with popular understanding despite the flaws highlighted in this section.

‘female’ which feels as though emphasising a biological and immutable dimension that sits uncomfortably within this study. The second is a choice to hint at the transiency and blurred boundaries of this life phase, thoroughly discussed in Chapter 3. I am aware of the limitations the term ‘girl’ brings with it, especially its patronising implications. These limitations are reinforced through the text of decree 39/GM/2003, which relies on the same construction. Yet, adopting the term ‘girl’ is for me an attempt at linking my (often critical) perspectives with the object of my criticism, parting from it through the analysis.

### 1.3 Thesis’ Claim to Knowledge

Theoretically, my claim to knowledge resides in the deconstruction of in-school pregnancy in Mozambique. This initially prompted me to consider pregnancy in relation to modern conceptions of the subject as unified and rational. The limitations of this approach then led me to suggest postmodern perspectives may offer more nuanced options for theorising identity in relation to in-school pregnancy in Mozambique. These embrace the notion of multiple modernities in order to theorise the intertwining of different regulatory frameworks young people navigate in the construction of their identities. My aim is to elaborate a space for young people’s agency in a post-structural context. I do so by gleaning young people’s perceptions of in-school pregnancy and by relating these to regulatory frameworks aimed at normalising pregnancy and parenthood. In so doing, I reconceptualise and reposition in-school pregnancy, attempting to break the vicious cycle it is currently contained within.

Multiple modernities and discourses do not exist outside of the subject just as much as the subject does not exist outside of them. But agency is expressed by virtue of the constant movement within and across regulatory frameworks, which identifies itineraries of identity. In this context, the construction of in-school pregnancy illuminates how multiple modernities concur, moving beyond the dichotomy between tradition and modernity.

In this process I remain context-specific and link pregnancy debates to the specific historical development of Mozambique, suggesting local socio-cultural meanings may have been glazed over by development discourses. By including in the analysis schools, families and young people I provide a thorough consideration of how different actors

perceive pregnancy, ultimately composing a multi-layered picture of the tensions arising within these intertwining discourses.

## 1.4 The Researcher Within

The roots of my interest in in-school pregnancy in Mozambique are deep-seeded and diverse, yet it is only recently that they turned into a more direct involvement and a PhD study. Thematically, my interest in the sexual and reproductive health of young people dates back to 2002, when I was mulling over ideas for my undergraduate dissertation in the department of Communications at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy. Intrigued by a vague sense of otherness, and interested in Social Sciences, I jumped at the chance of accompanying one of my lecturers during his fieldwork in Manaus (Brazil) and developing my own strain of research. A short review of the literature and frequent exchanges with connections in Manaus pointed to teenage pregnancy: informants were adamant that there were too many and that it was difficult to manage the consequences. This initial piece of work sparked my interest and encouraged me to change the direction of my studies and pursue an MPhil in Development Studies. In order to build a theoretical context for what I had seen and experienced in Manaus, I had to develop more tools to better understand the *problem* of teenage pregnancy and – I hoped – to make my own contribution to bettering the predicament of these girls.

Equipped with a year of solid intellectual grounding, I decided to go back to Brazil. A combination of events worked against me, and with the typical pressure of a Masters course, I soon realised that no universities or Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) had replied to my emails. I was about to set out to Brazil with no contacts and nowhere to stay, so a plan B was needed.

I decided to change the country but keep the language (Portuguese) and the thematic interest in sexual and reproductive health. Frustrated by not being able to return to Manaus, I looked at the alternatives with a distinct lack of enthusiasm. I emailed my proposal to NGO staff working in sexual and reproductive health in Mozambique and Angola. To my surprise, the then director of Pathfinder International, Mozambique got back to me with a proposal for an internship. Two months later I was boarding a plane



to Maputo with few expectations and many fears: this was Plan B, and so, I reflected, it could not possibly work out as well as plan A.

Yet this thesis is the story of how in-school pregnancy in Mozambique became an accidental passion. The initial internship provided me with good contacts and access to my fieldwork sites. My immersion in the town and its inhabitants also initiated a number of friendships that continue today. My first attempts at carrying out research on in-school pregnancy in Mozambique have since then given rise to a number of questions, some of which are driving this PhD study, while others remain unanswered at the same time as new questions arise. Needless to say, I never thought of reverting to my Brazilian study.

Between 2007 and 2011 I have spent a total of one year in the field. In this time I have embraced different identities: NGO intern, international consultant, researcher, student and English teacher. Through all of them I remained a white woman in her late twenties/early thirties; in some ways, a clear outsider. Yet, I believe I crossed the line and became a little bit more of an insider on more than one occasion, finding ways to empathise with research participants and identifying similarities in our life histories. This was particularly the case in my last 3 months in Mozambique in 2011 when I was myself pregnant with my son. I continue this discussion in Chapter 5.

## 1.5 Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 is introduction to the thesis and provides both an overview of the main themes and a rationale for the arguments put forward throughout the thesis as a whole. Chapter 2 provides contextual information on Mozambique, detailing how the history of Mozambique has been characterized by numerous modernising attempts at state-building which have impacted upon traditional institutions such as sources of authority, means of knowledge transfer and production and the structure of the family. This chapter will also introduce the symbolic value of pregnancy as a rite of passage.

Chapter 3 starts out by performing a tracing exercise, exposing the origins of the stigmatisation of teenage pregnancy. Although most of these discourses originate in the West, they have been uncritically transposed into African contexts, where they have contributed to creating cultural bias. More specifically, these biases stem out of a conceptualisation of the subject deeply rooted in the Enlightenment. The chapter

continues by reviewing studies on pregnancy and sexuality in Southern Africa, and Mozambique in particular. This review offers the chance to identify some of the misrepresentations occurring in connection with the reliance on Western interpretive lenses. By introducing post-modern studies I intend to engage with the concepts of multiple belongings and meaning-making in relation to pregnancy. Although aware that post-modernism is a Western concept in itself, I find that the spaces such an approach allows to open may offer better tools for the interpretation of local constructs. The conception of the subject I discuss in the final section of Chapter 3 relies on a post-structural framework and looks at how subjects exert their agency in a context of multiple modernities. The paucity of studies using this framework to look at a Southern African context prepares the context for the positing of my research questions.

Chapter 4 sets out by defining and discussing the research questions driving this study, and it engages with the methodological assumptions informing this work. These will extend to include issues related to research strategies and methods. In this chapter I try to make sense of my own doctoral journey and of the theoretical shift between a more positivistic position and a more post-structural one.

Chapter 5, 6 and 7 represent the main analytical body of this thesis. Chapter 5 elaborates on discourses reproduced within schools which are directed at constructing the binary opposition between pregnancy and education. Such dichotomies will be unpacked in the light of both local and historical developments and international discourses of gender equality in education. National policy tools will be submitted to textual analysis, looking at how these are implemented within four selected secondary schools. This chapter argues that a specific understanding of in-school pregnancy as unwanted and problematic, one that has been extended to cover all occurrences, thereby glossing over the variation and divergence and local socio-cultural implications.

Chapter 6 considers how families of pregnant schoolgirls or young mothers react and respond to a pregnancy. Families often bear the brunt of such pregnancies, and tend to reproduce and implement a different regulatory framework from those in the school contexts discussed in Chapter 5. Such a framework is generally related to traditional norms, which invest the older generation with the power to exert control over younger ones. Both chapters 5 and 6 discuss the ways in which schools and families consider pregnancy as a rite of passage, although the norms leading to this may function differently in each setting. Again, both chapters consider a space (institutional and

physical) and the people who inhabit it. Although structurally distinct, these two spaces communicate and intersect: neither chapter will present them as homogenous, but will strive to discuss internal gaps and fractures, as well as sutures, interconnections, and resignifications between the two.

Chapter 7 concludes the analysis by bringing in the voices and experiences of the young people taking part in this study. By contrasting dominant perspectives of pregnant schoolgirls as victims (of their partners, their families, of poverty and deprivation, of particular cultural prescriptions), Chapter 7 aims to engage with young people's agency. It does so by arguing that young people *navigate* different regulatory frameworks according to what they can and see fit, and with the aim of creating better conditions for themselves. In doing so, they also resist existing norms, challenging, therefore, the symbolic definition of pregnancy as a rite of passage.

Although concentrating most of the analysis in Chapter 5 to 7, I occasionally use sections of findings in other chapters. This allows me to better represent the circularity and iterative nature of my doctoral study, moving away from a more linear structure of questions and answers. For the same reasons I have relied extensively on cross-referencing.

Finally, Chapter 8 presents a summary of the findings of this study alongside the research questions elaborated in Chapter 3 and 4, thereby providing conclusions to the study.

## 1.6 Final Reflections

This introductory chapter has provided an overview of the study rationale and its relevance within and beyond academia. It has broadly defined the argument of this thesis, and outlined its structure. It has implicated the researcher in the text from the outset, mapping the beginning of the doctoral *journey*. This thesis charts a journey in the sense that its final claims do not correspond to its initial drive. Starting off with the ideal aim of contributing to lowering teen pregnancies in the global South, I have found myself arguing for the coexistence of multiple heteronormativities and itinerant meaning-making subjectivities.

## 2. A Mozambican Story

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In this chapter I turn to the geographical, political and social context of Mozambique. My aim in doing this is to paint a picture, albeit a partial one, of the complexities of Mozambican society. Although a comprehensive examination of modern Mozambique is beyond the scope of this thesis, the brief historical overview I propose addresses the development of traditional institutions and rituals, and the various attempts at state building. This is essential for shaping current understandings of in-school pregnancy, in that I argue that a multiplicity of normative frameworks has existed in Mozambique for some time. These frameworks do not just overlap, but are in constant flux, interweaving and continually shifting. At the same time, these normativities produce subjects that engage with them in complex ways. This chapter, therefore, gives a necessary background to my analytical claims. An analysis of identities would not be possible without considering temporality, or the development of institutions that still produces regulatory frameworks today.

I move on to providing some background to both the education sector and family structures in Mozambique, which constitute the *spaces* of this study. Lastly, I engage briefly with the *status quo* of abortion, often raised during fieldwork and beyond as a necessary *other* of pregnancy.

### 2.1 Brief Historical Overview

Little is documented about Mozambique before it became a Portuguese colony in approximately the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Henri Alexandre Junod (1912), a Swiss missionary who lived among the Thonga in the southeast of the country at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, wrote extensively about the social features of this tribe as it was still relatively untouched by European influence, suggesting this may have been the main structure of pre-colonial societies. Mozambique initially presented a diversified socio-cultural structure, with the north of the country traditionally matrilinear, and the south patrilinear. Yet as Arnfred (2011, 30) warns, being matrilinear does not imply being matriarchal, as authority may remain a prerogative of men. Matrilinearity and patrilinearity simply indicate the system of descent, designating whether a new-born baby should belong to the lineage of her mother or father. Maputo, situated in the far

south of the country, remains a traditional stronghold of patrilinearity, whereby children need to be recognised by their fathers in order to satisfy ancestral spirits<sup>3</sup>, and subsequently be accepted into their respective family lineage.

Sea access rendered Mozambique an extremely coveted region for Portuguese colonisers, as it provided an alternative route to the Indies and held the promise of resources to boost their homeland economy. It was not until Antonio Salazar came to power in Portugal in 1932 that stricter control over the administrative province of Mozambique was enforced. At that time, Portuguese emigration to Mozambique increased, relying primarily on profiting from its land resources and exploiting its labour force. As Salazar put it (Hanlon, 1984, 18):

*Colonies should produce raw materials to sell to the motherland in exchange for manufactured goods and thus provide a logical solution to Portugal's problem of overpopulation.*

In order to set up and maintain the massive extraction of raw materials from Mozambique, Portugal implemented forced labour. Local Mozambican workers who failed to grow the established amount of cotton or rice were sent to labour camps, where the conditions of work were poor and the levels of pay, low. These conditions propelled the fight for independence, which was initiated in 1962 by the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO)*<sup>4</sup>, the opposition party that still rules the country today. FRELIMO<sup>5</sup> began its fight with pro-independence demonstrations and strikes. However, establishing a dialogue with the Portuguese government proved impossible and in 1964 an armed struggle began. FRELIMO sought to mobilise the peasant community, which comprised the majority of the Mozambican population. According to a number of scholars (Finnegan, 1992; Hanlon, 1984; Mondlane, 1969) this was particularly difficult because Mozambique only had two unifying factors. The first was the common suffering under Portuguese rule. The second was a rudimentary and thinly

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<sup>3</sup> According to Vovò Rainha, one of the older research participants, if a baby cries too much, it is a sign that she has not been recognised by her father. Ancestral spirits are not satisfied, and the baby herself feels incomplete.

<sup>4</sup> FRELIMO: Front for the Liberation of Mozambique

<sup>5</sup> From here on I will use FRELIMO to refer to the people that actively organised and led the movements, and to the people that believed and participated in it. Using the name of the movement is not intended to essentialise the group. I am well aware that different perspectives coexisted under the same organisation. At the same time, I have opted for a simplification of the historical overview, on the basis of it not being the main focus of this thesis.

spread common language, Portuguese. Mondlane (1969) laments how a sense of Mozambican national identity did not develop because the only clear sense of belonging was the one to Portugal. Any other form of national awareness had been discouraged, the effect being that the process of nation-building that followed had the sole aim of ‘convincing millions of isolated peasants that they belonged to something called Mozambique’ (Finnegan, 1992, 31).

Mozambique attained independence on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 1975, 11 years after the beginning of the *luta armada*<sup>6</sup>. Peace did not come easy however. FRELIMO, formally pursuing socialist reforms in the country, was not willingly accepted by its neighbouring countries, nor by their ‘motherlands’. Dissidents from FRELIMO’s ideals, former Portuguese soldiers and prisoners and Rhodesians and South Africans opposed to independence, coalesced to form the *Resistencia Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO)*<sup>7</sup>. Supported by Apartheid South Africa, RENAMO aimed to increase Mozambique’s dependence on South Africa and to fight the spread of communism (Finnegan, 1992). In order to achieve such aims, RENAMO employed guerrilla tactics even before independence was proclaimed, which lasted for more than 15 years, until a cease-fire was eventually signed in Rome in 1992. In the last 20 years Mozambicans have strived to rebuild a country crippled by nearly 30 years of war.

This brief overview is key to understanding the historical processes that have contributed to shaping modern Mozambique and its interweaving modernities (discussed further in Section 3.3). The multiplicity of forces pushing and pulling the country in a number of different directions contextualises the coexistence of multiple regulatory frameworks and discursive formations, as I will argue in the next section.

## 2.2 Old Ways and New Means

Older generations were traditionally relied upon to convey knowledge on sexual and reproductive health to younger generations. For girls this knowledge often encompassed eroticism and strategies to acquire and keep men (Groes-Green, 2013), and was passed on from female relatives (preferably aunts or grandmothers as communication between mother and daughter was generally taboo with regard to these issues) to nieces or

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<sup>6</sup> *Luta armada*: armed struggle.

<sup>7</sup> RENAMO: Mozambique National Resistance.

granddaughters. These cultural transfers occurred within the context of ‘rites of passage’ (Junod, 1912, 178-179). Rites typically have a symbolic function, marking recognition of a change of status within a particular community. The cultural transfer identifies a particular phase of transition between childhood and adulthood, an interstice between two different categories, or a liminal space, as I will contend in Chapter 3. In this space where individual identity is constructed, ‘[rites] tell us who we have to be, what is legitimate to think, to say, and to experience’ (Osório, 2008). Because of their focus on eroticism and sexuality, rites would be different for young boys and girls. In this sense, they acted as regulatory frameworks in producing identities aligned with dominant gender regimes.

However, different regulatory frameworks invoke different regimes, requiring various forms of regulation. This is evident in Mozambique where over time, and through the various attempts at community, state-building and ‘development’, traditional institutions and practices such as rites of passage have been under attack as contrary to progress and social and national development. Yet, it is in the space where traditional systems are weaker and meanings are disrupted and fragmented that individuals actively negotiate meanings. What follows is an account of these attacks on traditional institutions such as rituals, and a consideration the impact of colonialism.

### 2.2.1 The Impact of Colonialism

Portuguese colonisers opposed the recognition of Mozambican identity through the establishment of an *indigenato*, a racial system distinguishing natives from non-natives in law, politics and public life, and treating the former as slaves while recognising the rights of the latter (Sabaratnam, 2012). This system also allowed for a third category, that of the *assimilados*. To gain this status and its corresponding rights (including access to education and a salary), a Mozambican was expected to adhere to the following (Mondlane, 1969, 40):

- Be able to read, write and speak Portuguese fluently
- Be able to support his family
- Be of good conduct
- Have the necessary education, individual and social habits to make it possible to abide by the public and private rule of Portugal

In order to formally recognise their status, Mozambicans needed to make a request to the administrative authority of the area who would pass it to the district governor for approval. Mozambicans were thus expected to give up their cultural identity to be recognised as individuals and bearers of a limited amount of rights. Education in particular posed a problematic dilemma. Mozambicans received a form of ‘rudimentary education’ (Hanlon, 1984, 21) which was nonetheless deeply inefficient as 90% of the Mozambican population were illiterate during and after the colonial period (Mondlane, 1969, 60).

The only feature of Mozambican social tradition that the colonisers maintained was that of the traditional leaders, or *regulo*, a system of governance quite similar to the English colonial administration of ‘indirect rule’<sup>8</sup> (Cooke, 2003, 49). Due to the vastness of the Mozambican territory and the limited numbers of Portuguese settlers, traditional chiefs were retained and expected to enforce Portuguese law. Using these established sources of power allowed the colonisers to be more effective ‘expanding the state’s visibility, surveillance practices and economic reach over the population as a whole’ (Sabaratnam, 2012, 3). This practice is particularly relevant as it contextualises current practices of surveillance implemented by schools in the monitoring of in-school pregnancies (Chapter 5).

Gender is rarely mentioned during colonial times, as a Christian ideal of women’s submission is taken for granted in the civilisation and ‘Portugalisation’ of Mozambique (Arnfred, 2004b). Within this context, female initiation rites were strongly opposed by the Portuguese colonisers because perceived as ‘vile and immoral’ (Junod, 1912, 176) from within the imported Catholic framework. In this regard, Portuguese colonisers were the first to stifle traditional ways of conveying information relating to the sexual and reproductive health of the younger generations, and to young women in particular. The resultant demise of traditional training around sexual and reproductive practices left young women without access to information about their own sexuality, restricted their control over their own bodies, reduced their capacity to make informed decisions and ultimately to exert agency. Clearly, this did not mean that women’s networks disappeared, but it does suggest that the transmission of knowledge concerning sexuality was rendered more difficult, and that the locus of control of women’s

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<sup>8</sup> Indirect rule: native chiefs are integrated into the colonial administration by representing it locally. Such a power does not however exist should it not be used to reinforce the colonial state.



sexuality shifted from women themselves<sup>9</sup>, to external institutions such as the Catholic Church.

Moreover, this suggests that a plurality of different frameworks started to coexist - colonial and religious rules, concurrently with local, traditional structures. Within this shifting and dynamic context it is legitimate to argue that individuals at the time would embrace different normativities, according to their contexts and circumstances. Despite colonial attempts at homogenising the socio-cultural arrangements, notable ethnographers such as West (2005) emphasise the continuous character of social change, challenging the dichotomy between continuity and change. In exploring the case of sorcery in Mozambique, West highlights both resilience and capacity to absorb new knowledge directed towards the interpretation of - and reaction to - new situations. In this way the transition from tribal to colonial society is understood as a complex set of cultural and social processes, within which there is a coexistence of a range of different identities. These social transformations are a continual process that did not end with the colonies, but persisted into the socialist era and beyond.

### 2.2.2 FRELIMO and Social Change

The FRELIMO government officially came into power in 1975, as Mozambique's independence was proclaimed. Propelled by the concept of false consciousness, FRELIMO actively discouraged traditional institutions, just as the Portuguese did (Lubkemann, 2008). The colonial *indigenato* system was dismantled for a new ideal, that of the *Homen Novo* (New Man), based on the modern ideals of scientific socialism, literacy, equality, and the rejection of superstition (Mosca, 1999; Sabaratnam, 2012). This shift is very important because, to some extent, the modern subject initially fostered here will remain and thrive through the coming decades. The campaign insisted on reforming education and healthcare, whilst including women in the liberation fight. For the first time, FRELIMO put gender equality on its agenda, creating a women's wing in the guerrilla army (Arnfred, 2004a, 113). Mondlane (1969, 147) further argues that 'by accepting women into its ranks, it revolutionised their position'. FRELIMO recognised women's role within society and actively engaged them as political mobilisers, leaders and soldiers. This was later supplemented by the establishment of a

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<sup>9</sup> This section has focused on women. As rites of passage are gendered, men went through different rituals which are not discussed here.

non-military women's group, the *Organização das Mulheres Moçambicanas (OMM)*<sup>10</sup> in 1973.

Yet, in spite of women being actively engaged in public life, including in agricultural work or in healthcare, Urdang (1989, 26) laments a lack of genuine participation in the planning process:

*The OMM follows party direction of women's issues rather than initiating, intervening, and pushing the party in its formulation of policy towards women.*

One of the biggest obstacles to this inclusion was the 'failure to consult women, especially on policy that affected them' (*ibid.*). This is an enduring obstacle for women, as evidenced by this thesis, which contends that non-consultation of young women in educational decision-making is at the roots of the current curtailment of pregnant girls' access to education.

FRELIMO fostered social change, as it marginalised traditional institutions and traditional sources of power that had survived the colonial phase. According to Finnegan (1992, 117)

*Traditional society was 'feudal'. Chiefs and curandeiros<sup>11</sup> were shunted aside, the brave new day of scientific socialism had dawned. [...] reactionary practices that oppressed women - laments a lack of participation in the planning process polygamy, bride-price, child marriage, initiation rites, were actively discouraged.*

The marginalisation of traditional sources of power and the reform of the healthcare systems were instigated by FRELIMO with the intention of creating modernised systems of education and healthcare. To do so, FRELIMO needed to manage two problematic situations - the lack of educated staff and the lack of resources. Within the healthcare system, FRELIMO resolved these by focusing mainly on preventive medicine, and on disseminating basic notions of health education and hygiene amongst the population. These tasks were carried out by the military (Finnegan, 1992, 181). Under FRELIMO, healthcare was nationalised and made free and the measures taken were highly successful. A survey conducted in 1982 by the World Health Organisation

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<sup>1010</sup> OMM: Mozambican Women's Organisation.

<sup>11</sup> *Curandeiro*: traditional healer.

(WHO) in urban and rural areas, reported ‘extensive contact by mothers and their young children with primary healthcare services’ (in Hanlon, 1984, 58). Moreover, incentives were made available to mothers-to-be for attending ante-natal services, baby clinics and seminars on family planning and nutrition (Hanlon, 1984, 60). After sex education through traditional rites was undermined by the Portuguese colonisation, FRELIMO attempted to bring it back, albeit by fostering it as a public service and one focused primarily on reproduction rather than sexuality. This shift marked the beginning of the medicalisation of sexuality in Mozambique.

To the same extent, FRELIMO recognised the value and importance of the transmission of knowledge. With Mozambican society becoming increasingly complex, more diversified skills were needed, calling for more formal systems for the education and training of the younger generations. Moreover, education needed to be on FRELIMO’s agenda for very practical reasons. As mentioned, the Portuguese did not invest beyond rudimentary education for Mozambicans. Thus, at independence Mozambique inherited an inherently crippled education system and no indigenous managerial elite. Further to the mass exodus of skilled Portuguese labour there were:

*[...] six economists, 2 agronomists, not a single geologist, and fewer than a thousand black high school graduates in Mozambique. (Finnegan, 1992, 30)*

This situation, coupled with a bankrupt economy due to the colonial financial exploitation, forced the new government to prioritise the restructuring of the national education system. Yet, FRELIMO’s ideals clashed vigorously with the majority of the population. Healthcare and education traditionally resided within the realm of local leaders and *curandeiros*. The transition from the traditional system to the modern one fostered by FRELIMO did not happen smoothly. This was mainly due to the conditions of extreme economic deprivation experienced by the majority, which wielded a compelling clamour for the fruits of independence, pushing FRELIMO to urgently address these reforms. While FRELIMO’s actions resulted in improved access to education and healthcare, especially in isolated rural areas, some perverse consequences arose. The destruction of traditional institutions deprived the population of the guidance they offered, and the power shifts at independence left the traditional elites powerless and therefore ready to align with FRELIMO’s opponents, fuelling a fifteen year long civil war.

RENAMO's actions were mainly directed towards the destruction of what FRELIMO had previously achieved. UNICEF estimates that between 1982 and 1985, 40% of schools were destroyed or abandoned, while by 1987 42% of rural clinics had met the same destiny (Urdang, 1989, 56). Primary healthcare services, an area where FRELIMO achieved considerable success, were severely crippled by RENAMO during the civil war. Furthermore, teachers and health workers were among the main targets of guerrilla offensive. The end result was that the training of new health and education workers was critically impaired.

This is the context the Mozambican population inherited in the 1990s, when peace was finally signed: weakened traditional institutions and the remnants of modern education and health care services that had been crippled by years of civil war. These processes of transition in Mozambique can be framed within a condition of permanent liminality (Szakolczai, 2000), further discussed in Section 3.3, rather than one of a static absence (of social norms) as suggested by 'anomie'. This is to indicate a complex and overlapping co-existence of different sources of authority providing reference points to the population.

### 2.2.3 Development and Other Accidents

In 1992 peace finally came to Mozambique. It had not been a smooth process, but it has nonetheless yielded long-lasting results. It is mainly as a consequence of this stability that Mozambique has become a 'donor darling' (Hanlon, 2010), receiving steadily high levels of aid and claiming successful stories of development. Mozambique has on the whole met donor demands, while its economy has been growing at an official average rate of about 8% per year since 1997 (de Renzio & Hanlon, 2007; EIU, 2006). Despite this, Mozambique still ranks 185<sup>th</sup> in the 2013 Human Development Report (Malik, 2013), with unchanged patterns of poverty registered throughout the country (Hanlon, 2010).

Economic dependence could be said to cripple national independence, as donors have a powerful say over internal budget financing (see Section 2.3). This current situation has developed out of the interplay of historical events, political will, lack of economic constraints and international pressures. Although Mozambique has come a long way from the initial structural adjustment program in 1987, and sacrificed its socialist identity for a more advantageous neo-liberalist position, its dependence on international

donors and development institutions remains high. Mozambique is thus one of the most aid dependent countries in the world, with between 40% and 55% of the government budget financed through aid (ITAD, 2013).

Because of FRELIMO's fraught efforts at modernising education and health sectors, it should not come as a surprise that these are still the sectors attracting most donor funding (Hanlon, 1996). Donor funding is provided in the form of Sector Wide Approaches (SWAP), moving away from financing a specific project to supporting an entire sector. This change calls for a reinforced collaboration between the national government and development institutions, whereby the former maintains the leadership while the latter provides technical assistance in the formulation of policies.

A good section of Mozambique's development agenda is now concerned with issues of gender equality. This is, for example, signalled by the ratification of international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (United Nations, 1979), the Cairo Programme for Action (United Nations, 1994), the Beijing Platform of Action and subsequent appraisals and implementations (United Nations, 1995). The Government has also signed other international agreements on the protection of women's rights, including the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and its respective additional protocols, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. In 2006, Mozambique also ratified the African Youth Charter (African Union, 2006), which gives direction for youth empowerment through participation.

All of this ties Mozambique into a complex international network of expectations and responsibilities. Yet, it would be unrealistic to consider a unitary discourse of development, as well as a unitary practice of development. As Chapter 5 will maintain, the national policy tackling in-school pregnancy was initially developed to bridge the gender gap in education and align Mozambique with the international agreements signed and ratified. Yet, this very same policy entails conflicting discourses which result in perverse effects. This is one of the key findings I will discuss in Chapter 5.

More recently, huge mineral discoveries have been made in Mozambique (coal in the province of Tete, close to the border with Zimbabwe and natural gas in the northern coast of Cabo Delgado), possibly suggesting yet more phases of transition for the

country as some foresee imminent detachment from international donors (Fauvet, 2013). In the meantime, the country remains in a strange schizophrenic condition of fostering accelerated growth and modernisation, while facing increasing poverty levels and continuing social attachment to traditional values and institutions.

Mozambique's history and present conditions have been presented here as a tangle of different and often contradictory trends and normative frameworks. For instance, recent data collected by Pathfinder (2011) suggest that young people increasingly go through rites of initiation discussed earlier in this chapter, even in the *modern* urban context of Maputo. In 2003 23% of interviewed girls and 38% of interviewed boys participated in such rites, while in 2009 these percentages went up to 63% for girls and 52% for boys. This emphasises how simplistic it would be to talk of a unified or unitary process of modernisation taking place in Mozambique. The transitions, as this section has maintained, are varied. This goes to support notions of multiple modernities in a context of permanent liminality, which will be discussed further in Section 3.3. Or, as Hodgson puts it (1997, 111):

*Globality and locality are inextricably linked, but through complex mediations and reconfigurations of 'traditional' society; the nonlocal processes driving capital mobility are always experienced, constituted and mediated locally.*

In other words, international and national policies tend to offer a macro perspective that responds to a modernising and neo-liberal agenda. At the same time, communities and groups respond by bringing in their own identities and specificities, together with other normative architectures. In this context of constant change, the spaces of this study – schools and families – act as simulacra of wider trends. I will now turn to discussing their development, and current framing.

## 2.3 The Education Sector in Mozambique

As stated earlier, native African education was mainly informal and relied on rites of initiation. The north of country, of Muslim influence, had some Quranic schools focusing on teaching Islam and Arabic. The first formal schools - often missionary schools - were set up by the Portuguese and aimed at introducing Christian/Catholic religious and cultural values amongst the local population. A key feature of colonial

education was the introduction of Portuguese as the sole language of instruction. This became particularly important in the late 1920s, when the class of the *assimilados* was introduced, and command of Portuguese was a powerful means to achieving this new status.<sup>12</sup> This aspirational status had an important influence on citizens who reified Portuguese structures and values in order to become *assimilados*.

Yet illiteracy remained the norm for the majority, as education and the status of *assimilados* were granted to a selected few. This is the context Mozambique inherited at independence. According to Mario and Nandja (2005, 2), Mozambique then went through three phases in the development of its education system. The first began at independence, continuing until the mid-1980s, with the main aim of fostering adult education:

*This phase was marked by a dynamic and multifaceted process in which people were mobilised in national reconstruction tasks, forging national unity and affirming the Mozambican identity.*

Women's education was also particularly encouraged, as a key tenet of the socialist movement, which was to include everybody in the new system. As a result of this enormous effort, illiteracy rates decreased to 72.2% in 1980 for the population aged 7 or more, with 59% for men and 84.5% for women (UNESCO, 2000). A second phase began in 1977 and lasted approximately 15 years - the length of the civil war. This had the effect of worsening the literacy rates, which fell back from 20% in 1983 to 14% in 1990 (Mungazi & Walker, 1997, 84). The third phase began in 1992, at the end of the civil war, and is on-going today. Literacy rates started to grow, with an estimate of a 40% literate population in 1998 (Mario *et al.*, 2003, 17), just 6 years after peace was signed. With the stability of peace, Mozambique is striving to develop an educational system tailored to its needs and population.

International funding has had a great impact on the education sector in Mozambique and comes in the form of SWAP as part of the *Fundo de Apoio ao Setor da Educação* (FASE) or Funding Support to the Education Sector (OSISA, 2012, 10):

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<sup>12</sup> National language remains to date a problematic feature of Mozambican identity: Ethnologue (M. P. Lewis *et al.*, 2013) lists 43 languages spoken in the country, all of which are living and spoken. According to the 2007 census (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2007) about 50.4% of all people aged 5 and older speak Portuguese, and 10.7%, including people of Portuguese ancestry and *mestiços*, speak it as their first language. This characteristic renders it particularly challenging for a unified education system to be efficient and effective.

*In 2009, the resources of the fund represented about 25% of the education budget, and between 60% and 70% of all direct foreign aid to the sector.*

International NGOs are also key in providing financial support for education and Mozambique relies on a number of different interventions aimed at improving access to and quality of education.

Generally, all partners contribute to the planning activities of the MINED in different capacities. Ministry and technical advisors and donors meet three times a year to develop and monitor annual plans. At the institutional level, representatives of the various donors meet regularly to coordinate the network, whilst at the technical level there are different working groups focusing on education levels (primary education, secondary education, vocational education and basic literacy), mirroring the internal divisions of the MINED. Alongside these, there is the *Grupo de Trabalho de Assuntos Transversais* (GTAT) or Intersectoral Working Group looking at transversal issues such as HIV/AIDS, health promotion in schools and gender equality. GTAT is formed by representatives of all donors. It is worth considering that donors not only have their say as funders, but also as technical assistants, which increases the weight of their opinion. It therefore becomes important to consider the ways in which foreign assistance may contribute to imposing Western conceptualisations, without carefully adapting them to the various cultural, social and economic forces at play (Kvasny & Chong, 2008). At the same time, donors' funding is undoubtedly making hefty contributions to improving the Mozambican school system.

The centralised MINED is based in Maputo, but thanks to its pyramidal structure, it extends throughout the country, where various District Services are linked up into Education Directorates, who then report to the MINED.



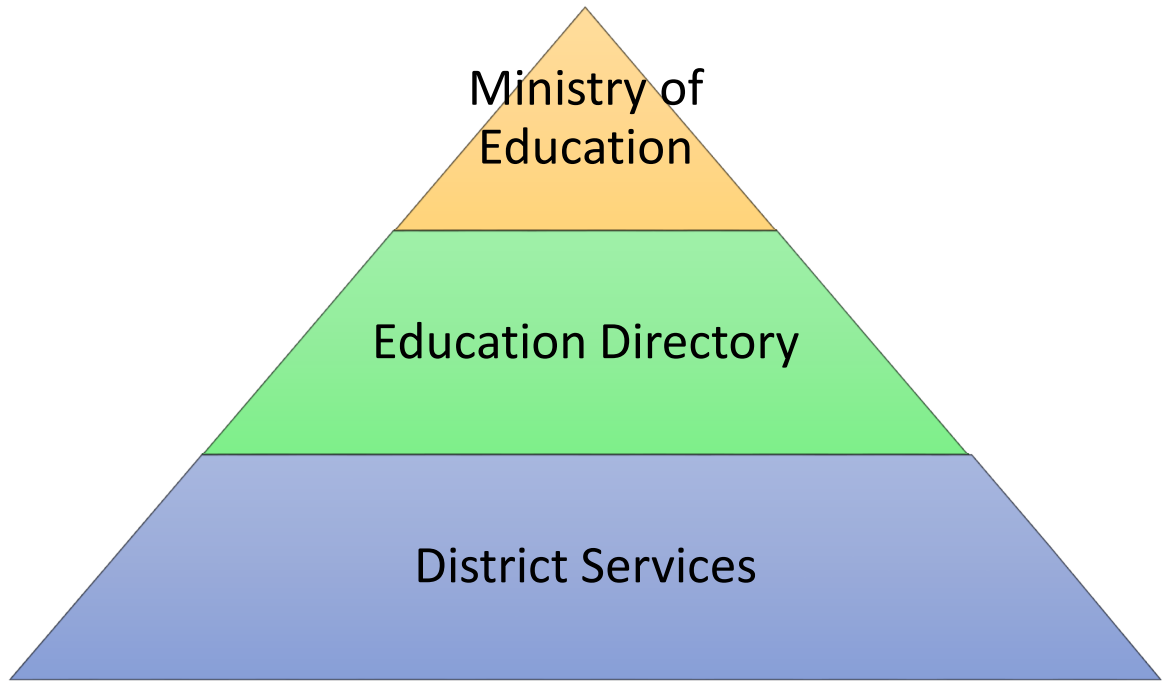


Fig. 1: Structure of the Ministry of Education

Public primary education in Mozambique is compulsory and free; it is divided into two levels: *Ensino Primario 1* (EP1), including grades 1 to 5 and focusing on children between 6 and 11. *Ensino Primario 2* (EP2) includes grades 6 and 7 and is ideally developed for 12 and 13 year old children<sup>13</sup>. Schools can be quite diversified in Mozambique, with some offering only EP1 and others extending to cover EP2 as well. Secondary school (ESG) is also divided into two levels: the first lasts three years (grades 8 to 10), while the second covers grade 11 and 12. The number of secondary schools throughout the country is more limited than primary schools, meaning that classes may be excessively large and pupils may live very far away from their schools (UNESCO-IBE, 2010).

Mozambique's commitment to safeguarding the universal rights of its citizens to be educated is indicated, for instance, by the ratification of the World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990). Consequently, and in line with previous FRELIMO restructuring, the main target for education in Mozambique has been to expand access to basic education and literacy programmes (Mario & Nandja, 2005). As Mozambique signed the Millennium Declaration (United Nations, 2000) and adopted

<sup>13</sup> Although developed for specific age groups, both EP1 and EP2 welcome children of different ages. Late entry into school, repeated grades, mobility, dropping out and re-entry are among the main factors affecting formal education.

the Millennium Development Goals, the focus shifted to completion rates for primary school, where Mozambique seems to be doing fairly well, with 81% of children of primary school age (6-12 years old) enrolled in school and a gender parity index of 0.97 at primary level and 0.98 at secondary level (UNICEF/INE, 2008). Female illiteracy<sup>14</sup> has decreased. In 2004 it was 66.2% but then dropped to 53% in 2008 (UNICEF/INE, 2008, 96). Though it is one of the key indications of gender equality, there is no nationally set goal for 2015.

This information is revealing for the way it clarifies Mozambique's position and the areas towards which resources are being directed. If access to primary school has been expanded, it is the transition to secondary school that lags behind (UNESCO, 2011), dropping from 60% in 2007 to 52% in 2010 (World Bank, 2012). This begs the question: what is preventing young people from continuing with their education? More specifically, what is preventing girls from attaining higher levels of education? Save the Children (2005, 13) suggest that gender inequality may be a consequence of sociocultural factors, as families give priority to boys' education; while girls are also more affected by early marriage and unwanted pregnancies, which are very often connected to school dropout. Osório (2007), as well as Cumbi (2009) suggest that a specific gender hierarchy may impact upon what is expected of girls and boys, as, for instance, girls' achievements at school are considered 'exceptional' rather than the norm (Osório, 2007). Osório (2007) further contends that an effective measure to bridge the gender gap would have to engage with the means of training currently used in schools:

*When talking equality we are talking rights and, primarily, the right to be. Sadly schools, and secondary schools in particular, transform pupils into clients of a form of knowledge based on memorisation and reproduction. This does not only refer to the practice of teaching, but extends to how knowledge and values are memorised, and reproduced. To talk of gender equality is to talk of the possibility of young people as subjects.*

According to Osório (2007) the process of socialisation carried out in schools clashes only partially with that carried out in families. For instance, of 647 young boys and girls interviewed for her project, 60% of girls found some agreement between the values proposed by their families and those fostered by their schools. The affinities between

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<sup>14</sup> In MICS (UNICEF/INE, 2008), literacy was assessed on the ability of women to read a short, simple statement or on school attendance.

these two spaces of socialisation are so strong that Osório and Cruz e Silva (2008) maintain that schools ‘do not create profound ruptures in the structure of inequality’ (20).

Families and schools are therefore intrinsically linked in the socialisation of young people. For this reason I will now consider the family as the second space of this study.

## 2.4 The Mozambican Family

As introduced in Section 2.1, traditional Mozambican culture consists of a diversified socio-cultural structure, with the north of the country matrilinear and the south patrilinear. Regardless of their gender structure, Mozambican families are regulated according to age hierarchy, where older generations maintain a strong control over younger ones. Similar features have been found elsewhere in Africa. For instance Oyěwùmí (1997) writes a compelling analysis of the Oyo-Yoruba in western Nigeria, arguing that their social hierarchy does not rely on gender as much as it does on seniority. Similarly, Vovó Rainha, an older woman from a semi-rural area taking part in this study, recounts how older generations would be in charge of arranging partners for young ones:

*Well, us girls, we would not know or meet our husbands before getting married. It was our parents who arranged girls for boys. The two would meet once before getting married, and this would happen under strict surveillance of two older women, traditionally belonging to the family of the boy. The two older women would then meet with the families of the boy and the girl to discuss how the meeting went. If the marriage was then agreed, these two older women would remain in charge of the practicalities concerning the wedding. It would be them who had to prepare the room for the newlyweds, when the time would come for the marriage to be celebrated.*

Vovó Rainha is an honoured citizen within her community. As a widow of a late traditional healer, she is looked upon as the main authority and would be consulted in matters relating to any changes in the community. Although from southern Mozambique, which is traditionally patriarchal, her role within her family and community has strengthened out of her seniority. This does not mean that gender

dimensions are absent from the social organisation of Mozambican groups. The quote above offers indeed quite a strong gendered perspective, in that there seem to be clear indication of who is in charge of what aspects of marriage organisation and celebrations. Gender and seniority are tightly interwoven in providing avenues for the workings of power (Bakare-Yusuf, 2004). Similarly, other older research participants report of how their own marriages were decided by family members, such as Constancia:

*It was very different before, it was up to your parents to find you a boyfriend and you would follow their advice on when to marry, when to have children and all that. People now behave differently, they have many partners and their choices and outcomes are not regulated by anything or anybody else but themselves.*

Constancia depicts a strong difference between the past, and her experience of starting a family with the present, or how she perceives younger generations' experiences. In her view, the *locus* of control has shifted from older to younger generations, enabling the latter to make their own choices, but also leaving them at odds with a set of norms that developed - and still gravitates - around family systems. This point requires a brief digression into the practicalities and regulations of family formation, which I move on to next.

#### 2.4.1 Around Family Formation

Family formation is traditionally heavily regulated in Mozambique along three different but interrelated steps: *apresentação*, *lobolo* and *casamento* (wedding). Although differing in purposes, these 3 steps are characterised by a high degree of fluidity, in that couples may consider themselves (and be considered by the community) married at any point in-between them. This is what Abdul shares of his experience:

*When a boy impregnates<sup>15</sup> a girl her family is going to find out sooner or later that she is pregnant. When they do, they take her to the family of the boy with whom she conceived. They want to make sure the boy and his family are willing to take responsibility for the pregnancy. So in my case,*

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<sup>15</sup> Although the verb 'impregnate' is a bit unusual, it helps maintaining the structure of the Portuguese verb I am translating from. The Portuguese *engravidar* highlight the active role of the man, while the woman is passively made pregnant. This is an example of how language contributes to the reproduction of gender inequalities.

*they all came to my house and I accepted them. I confirmed I was her boyfriend and the father of the baby. After that, we had a ceremony called 'apresentação'. It seems like a wedding, but it is not religious. It derives from old rituals, although not much is retained nowadays of the rites themselves. Now it is just the ceremonies, and there is not much preparation. The 'apresentação' is just for the families and for the community to be aware that she and I are together. So I may go to pick her up to go out and I would be allowed in to greet her parents. I become acquainted to her family, that is. After that you have the 'lobolo', and it is only after having had these two that you can proceed with the formal wedding.*

The first formal step has thus to do with families taking over the management of a pregnancy, and coincides with the family of the girl physically taking her to the house of the supposed partner in order to confront him. This meeting may have very different outcomes, with the man either fully accepting the pregnancy, or denying it. The former will progress towards marriage, while the latter will leave the girl and her unborn baby as the full responsibility of her family. Between these two extremes the options are manifold. For instance, the boys' families may encourage them to accept the pregnancy to then refrain from providing any material support when the baby is born. Or else they can opt for denying responsibility, while deciding at a later stage to send financial support.

If it is agreed that the boy is responsible for the pregnancy, then the couple may proceed to the *apresentação*. Literally meaning 'introduction', it is the formal celebration of the introduction of the two families, who will be soon related through the wedding of their children. During my fieldwork, I was invited to attend an *apresentação* by Fernando, one of my research participants. His brother's girlfriend was pregnant. An excerpt of my fieldnotes for the day can be found in Appendix 7. Traditionally, the bride and groom would move in together after the final ceremony, the official wedding. In Fernando's brother's case, however, the bride moved in at the end of the *apresentação*. This happened because she was pregnant and a decision about how to care for the newborn child had already been taken. The timing and sequence of these steps may also be impacted upon by other constraints. For instance, each step involves a considerable amount of money: organising a buffet lunch for approximately 50 people (families tend

to be quite extended in Mozambique). This alone is enough to dissuade the most traditional individuals from following the rules strictly. So even if traditional ceremonies and rules are followed, there is a certain degree of flexibility.

A further step after the *apresentação* is that of *lobolo*. *Lobolo*, often translated as bride-price or dowry, refers today to the custom of paying the bride's family for having her hand in marriage. This is, however, a reduction of a traditional institution. In the past the aim of the *lobolo* was to bring together the two families of the bride and the groom, and to indicate that the groom was capable of supporting his wife-to-be, but not exclusively at a financial level. By defining the assets the groom's family were willing to provide, *lobolo* symbolised a socially recognised relationship between the two families. These assets then assumed both an economic and symbolic value. Moreover, performing *lobolo* required thorough preparation, in which information about sexuality and marital life was provided to the couple. According to Bagnol & Chamo (2003), rituals related to *lobolo* used to emphasise the sexual role of women, while reproducing that of men as breadwinners.

In practice, a ceremony of *lobolo* is similar to that of the *apresentação*, in that it includes a meal prepared for the extended families of the bride and groom. The main feature though is a negotiation between the two families of the amount of money and goods to be exchanged during the ceremony. The meanings and practices of *lobolo* have been thoroughly considered elsewhere (Bagnol, 2008). Yet, I would like to stress here that although *lobolo* is a traditional institution in modern Mozambique, the ceremony has gone through numerous adaptations, from material to financial goods (Lubkemann, 2000) to its timing. I will continue this discussion in Section 6.1.3.

The final step is what Abdul refers to as the *casamento* or formal wedding. This may include a religious or a civil ceremony and shared meals with family members and guests. This last step represents the completion of the wedding and carries relatively little importance in itself. It is for this reason, together with general financial constraints that individuals may decide to postpone this step, even indefinitely as is the case of Paula, an older research participant:

*I left my parents' house when they had me lobolada. [...] After the lobolo we should have gotten married, but we did not because of financial problems. After the lobolo I stayed with my parents for another week, and*

*then they took me to my husband's. Now it looks like we have enough savings so we are thinking of getting married.*

Paula's story gives an indication of how fragmented a wedding can be, as even older people may still be in the process of getting married. In connection with this fragmentation is the flexibility surrounding community recognition: a couple is identified as such regardless of these steps having been performed. It is against this consideration that pregnancies acquire an increased importance: they contribute to formalising a relationship, even if it is not conducive to a wedding, or a long-term relationship. This space between individuals, family and regulatory frameworks will be further analysed in Chapter 6.

#### 2.4.2 The Chimera of the Nuclear Family

Agadjanian (2001), together with Andrade *et al.* (2001) and Fonseca (2000) agree that recent socio-economic changes have contributed to eroding the structure of the extended family in Mozambique. Andrade *et al.* (2001) look at how wars, economic deprivation and instances of globalisation impact upon traditional family structures in Mozambique. The outcome, they suggest, is a diversified picture, in which traditional and modern features coexist. Along the same lines Fonseca (2000) argues that family structures have been directly impacted upon by various social and political transformations, including wars, increasing migration, worsening economic conditions and widening poverty gaps. All of these contribute to individuals seeking diverse household arrangements at different phases of their lives. This, Fonseca argues, indicates that family systems should be seen as a constant work in progress as opposed to stable structures.

Geographical dispersion and marital instability among other factors make it increasingly difficult to meet traditional family expectations. Lubkemann (2000) explores how recent migratory flows led to the development of transnational families, where one or more members (generally men) move abroad (generally to South Africa) in search of better employment and rarely return, while keeping their ties in Mozambique. It is the case of Sofia, a young mother I interviewed in Maputo, who lives with Vera, and calls her *mãe* (mother), although she is in fact her boyfriend's mother. Sofia's boyfriend moved to South Africa and he occasionally sends some money back. He is however not part of this household on a regular basis. Migration is however not only a recent phenomenon, having long characterised Mozambican society (Lubkemann, 2009).

Related to this, but also part of wider social trends, is the increasing number of female-headed households, accounting for 26% of all households in the country (Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE), 2005, 21). Features such as these limit the applicability of anthropological conceptualisations of kin groups, encouraging scholarship to rely on Western discourses and feminist theorisations, generally grounded around the Western nuclear family (Oyěwùmí, 2004, 3) (further discussed in Section 3.1.3). This often leads to epistemological biases such as those surrounding in-school pregnancy, and childrearing responsibilities in particular. Assuming the nuclear family in considering the impact of teenage pregnancy leads to assuming that girls would bear the brunt of pregnancy and parenthood. This would prevent them from engaging in any other activity, such as, for instance, education and employment. Pregnancy and parenthood hence become constructed as means to vicious cycles of poverty, deprivation and dependence. What is missing instead is a consideration of what relations may instead be strengthened through a pregnancy.

Increased fragmentation of family ties (as in blood ties connecting the extended family) has instead encouraged the rise of alternative, non-kin social relations (Agadjanian, 2001, 294). This is the case for instance with strong neighbourhood networks or non-formalised unions such as the case of Sofia above. Pushing this further, Mariano (2001) contends that the concept of family should extend to include those aspects that go beyond blood ties and which can be manipulated, socially constructed and recognised. These types of ties are becoming increasingly important in providing both emotional and material support. This reconceptualisation leads to the definition proposed by Osório & Cruz e Silva (2008, 31-32) of the family as a space where people with or without blood ties share resources and develop relations of material and symbolic dependence. It is ultimately this conception of the family that will be used and furthered by this analysis.

## 2.5 A Note on Abortion

In Mozambique abortion is still formally illegal, following a Penal Code dated 1886. This indicates that abortion is only allowed to save the life of the woman, to preserve her physical health or mental health. Abortion is thus not allowed in cases of rape or incest, of foetal impairment or for economic or social reasons. However, such strict



regulations are no longer enforced, suggesting that the situation *de jure* does not correspond to the situation *de facto*. Moreover, the country has been expected since 2012 to pass a bill to fully legalize abortions. In the meantime, pregnancy terminations can be performed at the Central Hospital of Maputo upon formal request. This requires applicants to seek approval by three different doctors, to be in their 12<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy or less, and to pay a fee of 600Mts, corresponding to approximately GBP/£13. If the applicant is under age, she needs to be accompanied by a ‘guardian’<sup>16</sup>.

Although this process signals a direction towards the legalization of abortion, the current situation still presents a high reliance on illegal abortion practitioners. As a result, women carrying unwanted pregnancies often resort to illegal abortion practitioners, who operate without the minimum conditions of hygiene and technical safety, while being generally cheaper. As a consequence, abortion is both a site of stigmatisation and an accepted option within the peer-group<sup>17</sup>.

## 2.6 Summary

With this chapter I have provided some context to the study by engaging with the historical development of Mozambique and, more specifically, with the various attempts at state-building. These also impacted upon the two analytical spaces of this study: schools and families. Traditional institutions, such as rites of passage, have been repeatedly attacked as vestiges of the past and symbols of backwardness. The idea of a modern Mozambique has been invoked at different stages in order to initiate processes of development. Yet, current data about the occurrence of rites of initiation indicate the coexistence of traditional and modern practices, suggesting that a dichotomous relation between tradition and modernity may not adequately frame what is going on in

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<sup>16</sup> Guardian: accounts for the fact that family connections are volatile in Mozambique, and young people may live and be raised by adults other than their parents. This acts as a double-edged sword, as any off age adults may count as a guardian. This becomes particularly relevant in the case of young women seeking abortions, as their partners are often older than them, and may therefore act as guardians.

<sup>17</sup> This study looks at pregnancy. Yet, during my fieldwork I was encouraged to consider pregnancy’s ‘other’, abortion. Mr Emidio Gune, anthropologist at the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, reckoned that the intersections between pregnancy and schooling should not only be seen in terms of staying-in or dropping out, as this would assume a continuation of pregnancy. Emidio’s hypothesis was instead that girls, especially those attending schools in the (richer) town centre, would be unwilling to even get to that choice, and opt for a termination. Fully embracing Emidio’s suggestion would have entailed a complete change of focus and I decided against it. At the same time, abortion is often an option when a girl gets pregnant.

Mozambique. Traditional rites of passage served the purpose of sharing knowledge between older and younger generations. At the same times, they categorised individual identities into social identities, thereby serving to reproduce the social order (Osório, 2008).

This necessary preamble introduces this study as I will contend that in-school pregnancy is often taken as a symbol of the passage to adulthood, *in lieu* of rites of initiation. A pregnancy renders individual transition visible to the whole community. It signals active heterosexual relations and a coming of age by at least the pregnant girl. By displaying their fertility, girls provide a form of reassurance against fears of infertility. This way, their chances of having their relationship formally recognised may increase. At the same time, the stigmatisation of teenage pregnancy (the origins of which will be traced in Chapter 3) and the dichotomous relation it entertains with education hint to a connection to other binary oppositions, such as child/adult, fertile/barren and tradition/modernity, also to be further unpacked in Chapter 3. The contextual overview provided here serves as a necessary step in locating theoretical positions elaborated in the West to the case of Mozambique, in my attempt to develop a more refined conceptual vocabulary to theorise in-school pregnancy.

### 3. Positioning In-School Pregnancy

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In Section 1.3 I represent in-school pregnancy as implicated in a dichotomous relation with education and schooling: the latter are associated with notions of progress and development, while pregnancy works against individual and social progress, being synonymous with backwardness and tradition. In this Chapter I consider the research context of this study, defining its boundaries within the interconnections between development, education and gender, discussed in Section 3.1.

I then focus on teenage pregnancy by carrying out a tracing exercise, identifying the emergence of teenage pregnancy as a problem in the West. As I move to consider the specific context of Southern Africa, I draw on representations developed in the West, claiming how this process may have given rise to a number of biases, and ultimately misrepresented the issue of teenage pregnancies in Mozambique.

This review raises questions about the part played by pregnancy in shaping identities. I address it by discussing the different conceptualisations of the subject most studies imply. I argue that the modern subject, tightly connected with a notion of rationality, is at the core of the deficit representation of the school-mother. This idea is centred within theories of modernity, aligned with the primacy of Western countries over the global South, where it is adopted, in the main uncritically, by development discourses. The limitations of the modern subject calls for a consideration of the post-modern self, which endeavours to make an epistemological shift from Positivism's certainties to the fragmentations of discursive productions of selfhood. This leads to my dissatisfaction with the theorisation of agency within this field and pushes me to integrate theories of late, multiple modernities with postmodern conceptions of the subject. My aim is to push the theoretical boundaries of both traditions in order to reposition the pregnant schoolgirl as a subject that is contingent and diffracted. I find that this theoretical framework constructively enables a conceptualisation of young pregnant schoolgirls as navigating different regulatory frameworks in the production of their own identities. Moreover, this final theorisation prepares the space for the elaboration of the research questions.

### 3.1 Setting the Scene

I use the intersections between fertility, education and development as the theoretical concepts that frame the analysis.

#### 3.1.1 Development?

The concept of development is highly disputed, and it is not within the remit of this study to endorse one single definition. Development is rooted in the rise of the west and of the concept of modernity (Crush, 1995, 10). Modernity has come to be understood as a social system characterised by rationality, a mainly urban population, universal literacy and increasing reliance on science and technology (Dube, 1988, 17), features virtually unchanged from the Enlightenment. Similarly, the modern self believes in linear progress, which is on one hand associated with economic development, and with a sense of universality on the other (Bernstein, 1971). This assumes that all countries are en route to economic development, and that no country will remain anchored to its traditional structure, reinforcing the binary opposition tradition/modernity, whereby both concepts developed in contrast to one another. Thus the very same idea of modernity has developed in contrast to the backwardness of tradition (Power, 2008, 74).

By playing out this relationship between ‘developing’ and ‘developed’ countries, the concept and practice of development reinforces an existing hierarchical relation between the two, implying that the former are on their way to catching up with the latter. This assumption has engaged both actors in decades of bi- and multi-lateral enterprises aimed at supporting developing countries in their journey towards a state of achieved development. However, a lack of sustained evidence of achieved growth has led many to agree on the failure of development altogether. Escobar (1995, 2) for instance maintains that the ‘post 1945 development project is the last and failed attempt to complete the Enlightenment in Asia, Africa and Latin America’.

Scepticism over the potential of development has triggered important ontological questions such as what is development? And whose development matters? Such questions demand a critical take on how development is constructed, adapted, negotiated, reproduced and applied. These questions also prompt the consideration of what is lost through development processes, ultimately suggesting there may be a counterproductive side to it. This logic suggests a shift in emphasis from projects and

events to the people behind them in order to elicit the interests such projects ultimately serve. This also entails that the concept of agency starts to acquire more relevance.

Initially developed within the context of economic growth, development has then expanded in various directions to embrace different aspects of human life, from psychological to sociological and cultural dimensions. At the same time, a consideration of the interconnections of these various dimensions of development remains the exception more than the norm, as specific development aims such as education remain dependant on the overall imperative of poverty reduction (Humphreys *et al.*, 2008).

This critical approach to development goes hand in hand with theoretical conceptions of postcolonialism. This is informed by the assumption that processes of westernisation are at play indirectly through forms of cultural domination, or through instances of power-knowledge whereby western-based theorists maintain control over what is written about the developing world. In this sense, the West has come to represent the subject of knowledge, the knowers, while the rest of the world corresponds to the object of knowledge (Oyěwùmí, 2004). By encouraging a shift of relations between western and non-western, postcolonialism endeavours to identify underlying processes of subordination and to provide nuanced recounts of people's lives and perceptions as forms of counter-knowledge (Young, 2003, 114).

A different critical approach is that of human development. Heavily influenced by the capabilities approach developed by Sen (1985) and Nussbaum (2000), it suggests that development should be understood in terms of the freedoms individuals have to being and doing what they value the most. Policy indications are therefore directed at enabling individuals to reach their desired potential. Amartya Sen initially developed the capabilities approach in the 1980s as an innovative method to conceptualise development. According to Sen, each individual is different from another, and because of that diversity, valuing development in general terms can become a sort of rhetorical exercise. To avoid this, he suggests measuring it in terms of the capability each person has to function – namely, what they are able to do and be. Sen's envisioned ideal entails a very high degree of freedom, in which the concept of capability itself refers to the possibility of each person to choose the kind of life they want to lead. A capability is therefore a potential way of being, a *choice*, whereas functioning refers to an existing way of living, what has been *chosen* (Nussbaum, 2000, 86-96).

Within the field of development this diversification gives a particularly rich insight into the situation of the most vulnerable, and, especially, for those in poverty. Drawing on multidisciplinary to assess well-being entails renewed possibilities for development and for a more respectful approach to individuals. Allowing the conceptual space for individual aims and freedoms is a necessary step to understanding ways to improve people's well-being.

Although such actor-oriented approaches to development have positioned themselves quite strongly in the international arena, current discourses of education and parenthood, relevant to this analysis, are deeply rooted within specific historical processes embracing colonial times of European control over African states. In a post-colonial vein, it could be said that some of these discourses, developed within a colonial context, have been reinforced through development. As Humphreys *et al.* (2008, 7) maintain:

*These colonial discourses, emanating from the times of Christian missionaries, have subsequently been reinvigorated and reconfigured through the post-World War II settlement and the post-Washington Consensus in interlocking discourses of development, modernity and globalisation.*

This positioning of the subject, developed within the Enlightenment and broadly maintained through modern contexts and development agendas, remains at the heart of research carried out in Southern Africa, as I will contend in the next section.

### 3.1.2 Education and Development

The tight interconnections between education and development have their roots within the context of the Enlightenment, whose motto, *sapere aude*<sup>18</sup>, provides an incitement to pursue knowledge as means for both individual betterment and the achievement of wider goals. Knowledge became the means for the project of the Enlightenment, able to pull 'man' out of his immaturity, and guide countries to civilisation. This motto crystallises a specific epistemology, that of Positivism. This type of knowledge supersedes tradition in providing access to shared meanings framed by scientific concepts, virtually abolishing tradition's legitimising role and remitting administration and regulation to a select group of knowledgeable people (Bhambra, 2007, 48).

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<sup>18</sup> Literally, 'dare to know'.

Formal education has thus been at the core of the development agenda for decades, as its potential for growth has been acclaimed not only by scholars, but by policy-makers and international bodies alike. Human development approaches tend to value education as a means to acquire skills, which will then enable individuals to make informed choices about what they want to do and be. Education, in other words, ‘involves both instrumental and intrinsic values’ (Saito, 2003, 18). In turn, a lack of education may prevent individuals from attaining a higher level of wellbeing through, for instance, gaining academic qualifications and secure employment. Education and employment, in turn, become deeply interwoven and tightly related to processes of individual development (at the micro level) and of economic growth (at the country, macro level). Education has been defined as an individual human right (United Nations, 1948), and has been the object of the Education For All (EFA) campaign, starting in the 90s. Its potential for development moreover, has been recognised by its inclusion in the Millennium Development Goals in 2000. All of this emphasis on education has mobilised considerable funding and expertise in order to allow children all over the world to have granted access to and retention in schools. Despite concerted efforts, and despite access to schooling being more open than ever, retention remains highly problematic, with sub-Saharan Africa having the highest dropout rates of any region in the world (UNESCO, 2012b).

As the focus is slowly but surely shifting to consider issues of quality alongside quantity (Alexander, 2008; Tikly, 2011; Tikly & Barrett, 2009), mixed outcomes of the emphasis on education as a means to development have also triggered some criticisms over the potential of education altogether. A possible interpretation of this is the lack of markets for the skills developed through education (Easterly, 2002). Indeed if individuals are in receipt of training without avenues for their subsequent recruitment into gainful employment, then the time and money invested in education could be regarded as wasted, having little impact on individuals and country development. In this interpretation, formal education is not regarded as the sole means of bringing about development and individual fulfilment in Southern and Eastern Africa. This means that for many young people, the opportunity to attend school does not necessarily equate with economic security and a fulfilling career.

Criticism over the potential of education for development tends to look at education in postcolonial terms as a product of colonial times that has been updated, but not

inherently redressed, by development discourses. Formal education has in fact developed as a feature of western societies, being an aspect of a specific culture. Yet, it is usually propagated under

*universalistic values, human empowerment, scientific knowledge, and rationality, not only at the individual level, or even at the level of aggregated individuals, but at an institutional level* (Baker, 2009, 7),

remaining a means of Western hegemony (Tikly, 2004). As such, formal education may configure as the imposition of a specific cultural group over others. It follows that failures of the education sector to bring about development may also be read as forms of local resistance to external impositions.

The introduction of formal schooling can also be seen in cultural terms. For instance Macleod (2011, 20) suggests that the during colonial times it had a key role in creating adolescence as a separate phase of life. Schooling in this case refers to a very specific type of formal mass education, disregarding precolonial forms of education which relied on different modes of transmission of knowledge. Education in colonial times becomes therefore the way to civilization (*ibid.*).

The rise of the focus on gender within education and development goals has encouraged a considerable body of research on factors affecting girls' access and retention within educational institutions. Humphreys *et al.* (2008) research comprehensively in this area, identifying both 'pull' and 'push' factors. Pull factors include, household poverty and gendered labour demands, health, gendered socio-cultural regulations and education costs. Push factors include instead school-based gender-violence, a gendered curricula and school practices which tend to position girls as attaining less than their counterparts. Warrington & Kiragu (2012) explore instead why girls persist in school 'against the odds' (301), that is despite the push and pull factors listed above. This study offers insights here for it suggests girls themselves - their identities – may have a key role in impacting upon girls' access to and retention in formal education.

Because formal education generally occurs during a specific phase of individual development, the threats posed by teenage pregnancy are clear. Research reveals that in sub-Saharan African countries there are high rates of pregnancy-related school dropout (Chankseliani, 2008; Eloundou-Enyegue *et al.*, 2004; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999). This is a source of concern because of the positioning of schooling within the development



agenda. Chigona & Chetty (2007) focus on the challenges faced by in-school mothers in South Africa while trying to complete their secondary education. Their findings suggest that the risks associated with teenage pregnancy explicitly include the interruption of education and training. At the individual level, this may mean limitations on wellbeing through, for instance, the early curtailment of education leading to a loss of academic qualifications and subsequent secure employment. At a national level, the tensions between teenage pregnancy and education may hinder progress towards a fully modernised economy by limiting the number of appropriately skilled individuals in the workplace. At the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, this concern informed the development of Goal 2 (Universal Education) and Goal 3 (Gender Equality), expressing the need to promote universal access to education and to eliminate gender disparities in education by 2015 (Aikman *et al.*, 2005).

### 3.1.3 Gender, Pregnancy and Development

‘Gender, in the narrow sense of ‘women’, was only belatedly included in the international development agenda’ write Humphreys *et al.* (2008, 10). The inclusion initially happened through demographic analyses. This provided a link between reproduction and development in countries experiencing similar fertility patterns while also undergoing processes of economic growth. The identified pattern seems to be that countries beginning a process of economic growth experience high birth rates and high mortality rates. This results in improvements in living conditions so that a second phase begins. In the second phase, there are high birth rates and low mortality rates resulting in major population growth. The final phase involves low levels of both birth and mortality rates. After this, a country’s population growth stabilises (Caldwell, 1982; Kirk, 1996). Within this perspective, teenage pregnancy figures as an ‘anomaly’, as young age at first child suggests higher fertility rates, thereby fuelling Malthusian fears of overpopulation which are not consistent with theories of fertility decline. At the macro level this raises important issues of sustainability and questions related to the production, distribution and maintenance of scarce resources.

Two main movements have characterised the relationship between gender and development: Women in Development (WID), originating in the 1970s in recognition of the scarcity of women in development projects, and Gender and Development (GAD), arising in response to the limitation of WID. In the context of WID, women’s education

is not pursued as an end in itself, but as a means to bring about development more effectively. Policy advice stemming out of the WID is clear and based on simplified notions: gender refers to women, education to formal schooling and development to increased GDP.

Within WID, the intersections between education and fertility mainly refer to the positive effects the first has on the latter. More specifically, female education affects both the costs and benefits of having children. In general, female education plays an important role in reducing fertility by empowering women and enhancing their socio-economic status (Sen, 1999). Moreover, educated women are more likely to want their children to be educated, thus increasing the cost of having children (Dasgupta, 1995; Thirlwall, 2006). Thirlwall (2006) characterises this as ‘the virtuous cycle’ of higher education, low fertility, ‘better quality children’ and higher productivity. Dasgupta (1995) also emphasises the importance of female education asserting that educated women play a role of ‘tradition breaker’, in that they prefer to have fewer but more educated children, perhaps indicating a quantity-quality trade-off.

Within this framework, in-school pregnancy is understood as a disruptive event that needs to be avoided for the negative impact it has on the individual, and on her household. Teenage pregnancy impedes gender equality by putting girls in a situation of dependence as they usually bear the brunt of both childbearing and childrearing. Moreover, in-school pregnancy is readily seen as having negative economic consequences for the country as a whole. For instance, it limits the specialisation of high numbers of individuals who drop out of school, and subsequently limits the chances of each to contribute to national economic development.

The transition from WID to GAD in the 1980s was due to the identification of a perceived shortcoming of a focus upon only improving access to school for girls. GAD focuses upon issues of retention instead. This refocussing suggests that structural features prevent girls from remaining in school and are pivotal in understanding their experiences. GAD approaches have been instrumental in shifting the discourse from the necessity of avoiding in-school pregnancy to the importance of understanding what in-school pregnancy entails, what its causes may be and how individuals make their choices. It has allowed a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, which in turns may inform more tailored solutions.

Yet, this approach remains overlooked by current policy documents, such as the latest UNFPA report which indicates in its foreword (2013, ii):

*When a girl becomes pregnant, her present and future change radically, and rarely for the better. Her education may end, her job prospects evaporate, and her vulnerabilities to poverty, exclusion and dependency multiply.*

With this doom-laden definition of in-school pregnancy, the UNFPA seems to revert back to a more unnuanced WID approach.

In general, both WID and GAD approaches offer ‘oversimplified theorisations’ (Humphreys *et al.*, 2008, 13), which prefigure Western constructs that have fostered top-down approaches to the conditions of women. These approaches have contributed to mainstreaming local contingencies within donors’ agendas, putting some distance between local and international partners (Kolawole, 2004, 258) which have had the effect of *othering* Africans from Western women and feminists.

These approaches have a further limitation which is that they equate gender with women. Teenage pregnancy has developed as concerning only females, coinciding with teenage motherhood (Kaplan, 1997). This has contributed to placing blame primarily on teen mothers, with little to say about the role of fathers (Shields & Pierce, 2006, 142). At the same time, scholarship has tended to portray women as victims, in a generalised culture of silence (Kolawole, 2004). Saunders (2002) argues that this ‘victimology narrative’ (14) fits well with the development apparatus, which is constructed around the hierarchical opposition between ‘developed’ and ‘developing’, and reproduced within the opposition between empowered western women, and victimised non-Western women.

Oyěwùmí (2004) further contends that much of the Western literature on gender uses the concept of the nuclear family as a necessary starting point. The relevance and applicability of gender in contexts where nuclear types of family are not dominant should be taken as limited, as is the case for the Oyo-Yoruba of Western Nigeria (1997). Oyěwùmí proceeds to argue for the relevance of the concept of seniority, to the point that she seems to dismiss the applicability of gender altogether. Bakare-Yusuf (2004) offers an exhaustive consideration of Oyěwùmí’s theorisation, arguing for a more inclusive elaboration of complex social relations. For instance she suggests that

seniority sometimes hides structural gender imbalances, arguing that the workings of power may be more subtle and pervasive than in Oyěwùmí's account.

This last point has encouraged me to consider the intersections of different social and cultural dynamics in looking at in-school pregnancy, including historical, political and economic processes. For this reasons I draw upon postcolonial scholarship integrated with poststructural approaches to notions of identity construction, a point I take up in Section 3.3.

## 3.2 In-School Pregnancy

Having established the borders of this study in the previous section, I focus on in-school pregnancy as representing the central 'object' of my interest. This section is composed of two sub-sections. First, I carry out a tracing exercise, identifying the emergence of teenage pregnancy as a problem. The studies I review focus largely on Western countries such as the USA and UK which have produced the dominant conceptual frames for the corresponding literature from developing countries. These latter studies explore similar research questions and apply analogous research methods (Macleod, 2003, 419). This trend does come at a price though, as the uncritical transposition of theoretical frameworks from the global North to the global South may have given rise to a number of misrepresentations of teenage pregnancies in Mozambique.

After tracing the origins of the deficit view of teenage mothers I move on to consider pregnancy in Southern Africa. Here I associate the 'problem' of teenage pregnancy with other relevant discourses, such as its connections with sexuality or with development as already discussed in Section 3.1. In doing this, I 'localise' teenage pregnancy within the historical and cultural context of Southern Africa.

### 3.2.1 Tracing the Problem

Lawlor & Shaw (2002, 95) suggest that the identification of teenage pregnancy as a problem may be a consequence of the medicalisation of pregnancy, which occurred in the West in the 18th and 19th centuries. This entailed a shift whereby men became responsible for supporting women in childbirth – a task that had previously been the responsibility of women. As a consequence, pregnancy and childbirth moved from the private to the public realm of medicine. Similarly, the emphasis, once on the subjects,

transferred onto the event of pregnancy, which became the object of scientific enquiry (Cherrington & Breheny, 2005, 95).

Medical research on teenage pregnancy abounds, promoted by the concern raised by the age of the young mother, which allegedly renders her unprepared to have a baby, both physically and psychologically (Breheny & Stephens, 2007, 336). Fraser *et al.* (1995) for instance contend that a younger age is positively correlated with an increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcome, independently of socio-demographic factors such as race, education and marital status. International reports also reflect similar concerns: the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2004) states that pregnant teenagers are more at risk of hypertensive disorders, anaemia and iodine deficiency, not to mention preterm birth or low weight babies. Moreover, the risk of dying from causes related to pregnancy is twice as high for girls aged 15-19 than for older women (WHO, 2006).

However, others studies suggest that young age may be associated with better pregnancy outcomes for both mother and child (Morris, 1981; Reichman & Pagnini, 1997). Age apart, other contributing factors such as education, social status and access to health facilities all need be taken into account, as these may be disadvantageous to the woman who becomes pregnant at a young age. For example, the stigma and discrimination may encourage girls to hide their pregnancy and to forgo adequate care. Poverty and deprivation may raise nutritional issues which may impinge on the healthy development of the pregnancy itself (WHO, 2006, 4). The medical research on teenage pregnancy certainly remains inconclusive (Cunnington, 2001; Daguerre & Nativel, 2006; Lawlor & Shaw, 2002, 553).

At the same time, the associations between medical risks and teenage pregnancy remain strong in international reports concerning the Global South (UNFPA, 2013). The medicalisation of pregnancy has been strengthened by the emergence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has led to an expansion of research on human sexuality (Parker & Aggleton, 2003; Parker *et al.*, 2000; Wellings *et al.*, 2006). This is connected to understanding human sexuality mainly in terms of sex, hence limited 'to the biological characteristics that define humans as female or male' (Padgung, 2003, 18). Today, studies on sexuality have expanded to encompass a multitude of perspectives: cultural, anthropological and psychological approaches have flourished, elaborating on the ways the body is affected by non-biological events. These studies have been 'closely linked to advances in HIV prevention and health promotion' (Parker & Aggleton, 2003, 3).

The problematisation of teenage pregnancy is also implied by studies linking teenage pregnancy with weak mental health. For example teenage mothers are thought to have increased rates of depressive symptoms in comparison to older mothers (Deal & Holt, 1998; Hudson *et al.*, 2000). The links between depression and teenage pregnancy may be understood on two levels. On the one hand, childbirth and childrearing at what is viewed as an early age disrupt the 'normal' cognitive development of the individual. This may lead to predicaments such as socioeconomic adversities, lone motherhood and a lack of a supportive network, which, in turn, may exacerbate depression rates among adolescents (Deal & Holt, 1998, 266). On the other hand, depressive symptoms may exist before the pregnancy (Jaffee, 2002; Woodward & Fergusson, 1999) and in this sense, they may increase the likelihood of the pregnancy itself by diminishing individual agency and will power (Fergusson *et al.*, 2001).

The studies reviewed above construct teenage pregnancy as deviant behaviour that lies outside rational choice, to the extent that Bruce (1978, 77) defines it as an 'offense against planning; [...] a dramatic neglect of the ability to judge the present in terms of a perceived future'. Bruce's statement reflects the fundamentals of neoclassical models of rational decision making, in which the individual carries out a cost-benefit analysis before the action/s she/he considers best in order to achieve the desired outcome. Teenage pregnancy is thus constructed as personal failure.

At the same time, these studies present some embedded assumptions concerning cognitive development, agency, age relations and age-appropriate behaviours. By implying and normalising the modern self (discussed in Section 3.3.1), they draw a line between mainstream and deviant girls, which lays the ground for discriminatory approaches to teenage mothers. Luker (1996) develops the concept of 'fitness' (30-34), to distinguish those deserving of marriage and reproduction from those who do not, on the basis of their age, financial conditions, educational levels and mental stability. Phoenix *et al.* (1991, 16) argue that the pathologisation of teenage pregnancy has allowed the state to act in a situation of 'persisting surveillance'. In other words, childbirth and childrearing become means for the state to deploy and reproduce specific discourses around gender and sexuality. In so doing, teenage pregnancy 'demonstrates how constructions of knowledge articulate with established power relationships' (Phoenix *et al.*, 1991, 21) and ultimately contributes to the reproduction of its own pathologisation.

Individual weaknesses are also emphasised by Musick (1993, 13) in connection with socio-economic deprivation. She argues that

*In order to avoid teenage motherhood, girls growing up in poverty need to possess not just average but above-average psychological resources and strengths, self-concepts and competencies.*

Her research, based in the US, suggests that poor girls need to be over-endowed with psychological resources, hence assigning a strong role to the intrinsic characteristics of the individual. Yet, by focusing on teen mothers' psychological characteristics and her context, Musick fails to recognise any agency in teenage motherhood. Teenage mothers are portrayed as victims of their psychological weaknesses, their emotionally scant upbringing and extended context of poverty. She assumes that teenage mothers lack the psychological resources to confront the difficult contexts in which they grow up. Teenage mothers are thus conceptualised as lacking; as being below average individuals that get stuck between the limitations of the context they live in and their own individual limitations. This prevents them from enacting change in their lives.

Socio-economic and contextual disadvantage is referred to extensively in the literature, and it remains the main source for policy discourses and strategies, both in the developed and developing world (Arai, 2009, 21). One of the tenets of current Western literature on teenage pregnancy indicates socio-economic structure as one of its root causes (Arai, 2003, 201), suggesting poverty and deprivation may be strongly correlated with teenage pregnancy. Studies from the Anglo-Saxon context embracing this approach tend to either emphasise a disadvantaged socio-economic context as a cause of teenage pregnancy (Arai, 2003, 2007, 2009; McCulloch, 2001; Singh *et al.*, 2001), or stress deprivation as a consequence of teenage pregnancy (Chevalier & Viitanen, 2003; Hobcraft & Kiernan, 1999; Kiernan, 1995). Both perspectives reinforce one another by viewing teenage pregnancy as trigger of a vicious cycle, worsening young women's predicaments.

The first strain of research focuses on poverty and ethnic/racial belonging. The assumption in this case is that policies targeting teenage pregnancy will not be effective, as they will not address the root causes of poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage. The second strain of studies associates teenage pregnancy with the curtailment of education and work opportunities, arguing that teenage pregnancy may facilitate a

descent into social exclusion<sup>19</sup>. Research from Britain suggests, for example, that a reduction in teenage pregnancy may improve social inclusion by decreasing the numbers of those depending on the welfare system and increasing the numbers of those contributing to it, through education, training and paid employment (Chevalier & Viitanen, 2003, 324).

Socio-economic disadvantage may be concentrated in specific geographic areas, hinting at forms of ghettoisation in relation to teenage pregnancy (Arai, 2009). There seems to be a strong association between the spatial concentration of economically and socially deprived households and teenage non-marital pregnancy in Britain (McCulloch, 2001; K.Turner, 2004), meaning that the experience of teenage pregnancy is deemed to be generally closer to the lived experiences of pupils coming from state schools and poorer socio-economic contexts. Within this approach, values and patterns of behaviour exist at the community level and subsequently instil ‘dysfunctional’ norms into individuals (Arai, 2009; Bauder, 2002). In this context, the main concern seems to be the risk of worsening conditions of social exclusion, to the extent that teenage pregnancy and social exclusion are often conflated (Hoggart, 2003, 147).

In the USA, where power relations are deeply intertwined with race relations, Geronimus (2003) suggests seeing delayed childbearing as an adaptive practice for European-Americans, while African-Americans may invest in early parenthood as an adaptive practice towards the structural constraints that may shorten overall life expectancy (881). Yet this position entails an essentialisation of race and ethnic belonging that does not necessarily resonate with globalised societies. Baumann (1996) for instance, in his ethnography of Southall<sup>20</sup> in the UK, identifies the workings of a dominant discourse which reifies culture by tracing it to ethnicity. This discourse, he claims, is ‘neither good nor bad in itself’ (20), but it is surely not the only one. Baumann proceeds, in his ethnography, to consider the ways in which district dwellers produce a sense of identity and belonging, thereby developing alternative views of what culture and ethnicity actually mean.

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<sup>19</sup> The concept of social exclusion gained visibility during the 1950s and 1960s in France, to indicate those who remained at the margins, ‘excluded’ by the social system, unemployed and unprotected by social welfare. The term was used with the aim of reminding wealthy states of the recurrence of deprivation even within their boundaries (Ruggeri Laderchi, Saith, & Stewart, 2003). Social exclusion has been criticized because of its ambiguity in terms of agency: it often remains unclear who is excluding whom, which impacts one type of action necessary to realize inclusion (Burchardt et al., 2002).

<sup>20</sup> Southall: Large suburban district to the West of London.



Teenage pregnancy can be framed as a form of resistance to cultural and societal oppression (Brubaker & Christie, 2006). From this perspective encouraging delayed childbearing through social welfare and policies may act as a form of cultural domination. Geronimus (2003) has introduced the concept of ‘stratified reproduction’ as ‘a process of power relations that helps to see the arrangements by which some reproductive futures are valued while others are despised’ (882). Such a process is reminiscent of Luker’s concept of fitness (1996, 30-34), introduced above. Establishing delayed childbearing as the norm creates a culture of ‘common sense’ which individuals have little incentive to question. Hence, Geronimus claims that the costs of maintaining a cultural system outweigh the benefits, and individuals or groups may opt for resisting it or pressing for change (2003, 884).

Similarly, the problematisation of teenage pregnancy has also been constructed in connection with family structure. Delayed childbearing as discussed above assumes pregnancy occurs within the Western nuclear family, which in turn may often suppose married adult (hetero-sexual) parents. However, different ethnic groups may value different family structures, such as the extended family. In this context, teenage pregnancy may be far from being dysfunctional or disruptive, as childrearing may be distributed across a strong social network, impinging relatively little on girls’ development. A key critique of such studies is therefore their essentialisation of culture (Bauder, 2002, 85), a process according to which cultural norms and values are considered dysfunctional by comparison with the dominant cultural practices.

In this section I have reviewed studies constructing a deficit view of the pregnant teenager. This view informs and shapes research and policy from sub-Saharan Africa. Its interconnections within education and development, discussed in Section 3.1, generally worsen the representation of pregnant schoolgirls or in-school mothers, glossing over local meanings and values. It is to these that I turn my attention in the next section.

### 3.2.2 The Southern African Context

In this section I discuss a number of approaches relevant to the construction of in-school pregnancy in Southern Africa. Thomas (2007, 48) laments how procreation has remained largely unexplored within African social and symbolic life, and for this reason

I strive to make connections both with the problematisation of teenage pregnancy sketched above, and with local cultural and historical structures and meanings.

Most studies reviewed in the previous section, which contribute to a mainstream understanding of teenage pregnancy, rely on a Western individualised understanding of the subject. This leaves local social structures invisible and produces a deficit construction of those who do not conform to its implicit norms. I emphasise how individuals are framed in relation to dominant discourses emanating from the West that deny the plurality of norms characterising contexts such as Mozambique. This is particularly relevant for this study, which aims at conveying normative diversity, and the positions of pregnant schoolgirls and in-school mothers in navigating such array.

### *Motherhood as defining personhood*

Mikell (1997, 4) identifies the central role played by fertility and motherhood in defining women's identities in postcolonial Africa by suggesting pronatalism as a key tenet of 'emerging African feminism'. Similarly, Amadiume (1997) suggests the centrality of motherhood may not have been taken seriously by a Western tendency to 'patriarchalise' (Arnfred, 2004a, 207) local structures. More specifically, Western eyes have traditionally conflated the status of motherhood with that of wifehood, seeing subordination and dependency as feature of the latter status. This way, motherhood has failed to be acknowledged as a 'locus of power and autonomy' (*ibid.*).

Childbearing and motherhood, instead, have been the 'main source of a woman's respect' since the precolonial period (Iliffe, 2005, 264), invoking a regulatory framework which puts pressure on girls to have children early (Loforte, 2007, 29). Parenthood seems thus to reinforce particular gender regimes, first coined by Kessler *et al.* (1985) and articulated by Dunne (2007, 502) as:

*A 'gender regime' is constructed through institutional practices (with inscribed social relations of gender), which symbolically construct and regulate everyday life and normalise unequal power relations.*

The concept of gender regime builds on a discursive understanding of the subject and explores the gendered norms at work in particular contexts, potentially including the extent these make assumptions about heteronormativity. Here, the process of subjectification is not only discursive, but it is also hierarchical as some discourses

interconnect in setting the norm, and in defining what is or should be the standard of normalcy. In relation to the reproductive capacity of both men and women, fertility is identified as an important signifier of gender. A teenage pregnancy may thus be encouraged in high fertility societies in order for girls to prove their reproductive capacity and qualify as potentially good wives in view of a marriage (Price & Hawkins, 2001, 200). For men in such societies, fatherhood is highly valued as it provides a sense of belonging in patriarchal societies and determines which ancestors will protect the baby (Jewkes *et al.*, 2009, 681).

This perspective broadens the scenario produced within demographic conceptualisations of fertility goals driving individual sexual behaviour, which assume individuals as fully rational actors. Yet, Fennell (2006, 3-4) suggests a consideration of sex as

*[...] an inherent social process, in that it requires at least two people to occur, and its sociality is complicated by an array of norms which dictate the appropriate context and scripts for sexual activity. [...] People's sexual behaviour is guided by many social concerns other than their fertility goals, and the social context of sexual interactions can explicitly interfere with the achievement of fertility goals.*

The extended community may attribute specific meanings to pregnancy and parenthood. This suggests that it is not enough to assess reproductive choices against individual preferences. It is important to frame them within the wider scenario of the options at the disposal of the individual and of the social and cultural scenarios in which such choices are taken, conjunctively with other people's choices and behaviours. This can be illuminated by Cornwall's notion of 'socially embedded nature of reproductive agency' (Cornwall, 2007) where:

*The contingencies that complicate 'choice' and the extent to which the pursuit of strategies is always tempered by relations of sociality and power suggests the need for a multifaceted approach [...]*

The concept of socially embedded reproductive choice suggests that the categories of planned and unplanned pregnancy are not to be interpreted as dichotomies, but as extremes of a continuum. This continuum in turn, does not exist in a social vacuum, but in a space dense with interactions. These include individual and social expectations, community and social and cultural norms which affect or constrain the way people

perceive their own options and preferences as well as the way they choose to come to terms with translating their choices into behaviours. The social embeddedness of sex, pregnancy and parenthood can be insightfully considered within this representation (Fennell, 2007, 17):

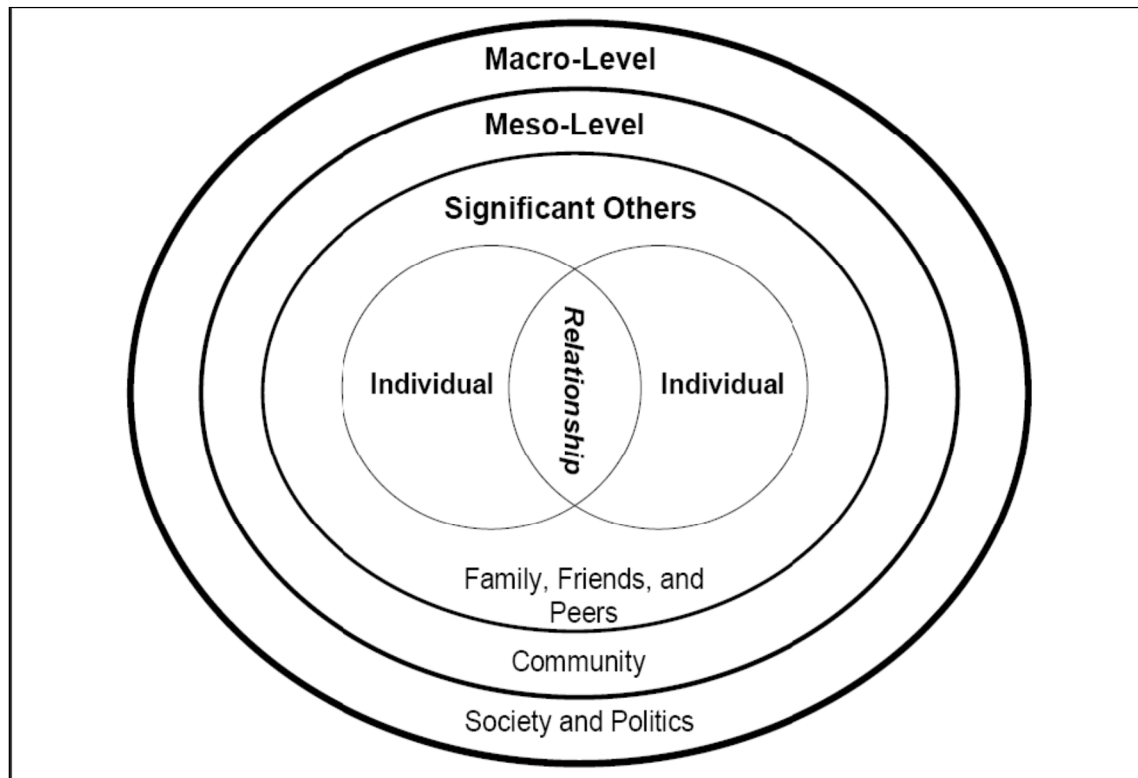


Figure 2: the sexual context of couple's contraceptive decisions

Figure 2 offers a theoretical perspective within which it is possible to conceptualise agency as a relational construct (Section 3.3.2).

Yet, the emphasis on fertility goals structures much of the scholarly and policy work on pregnancy and development. Some insight can be gained by using Luker's concept of fitness (1996, 30), discussed in Section 3.2.1. What is of relevance here is how individual fitness is achieved in the West, or what values underpin individual success, thereby symbolically granting individuals the right to have children. These values are socio-cultural in nature, and linked to a specific space. However, they have been developed in the West to then be uncritically applied to African contexts, where the relation between fitness and ability to reproduce seems inverted. The way in which pregnancy and parenthood contribute to individual fitness may be a more significant insight than promoting a modern ideal of young women, who should reach some individual success in order to be deemed fit to reproduce.

If both WID and GAD adopt simplified and essentialised theorisations of gender, there are few studies adopting a critical stance and considering, for example, how pregnancy contributes to specific gender constructions. For instance Preston-Whyte & Zondi (1992, 148) emphasise the positive role of children within South African families. Out of wedlock pregnancies may still trigger punishment, but their outcome is controversial as babies are generally well accepted into girls' families and may increase girls' chances of getting married: their womanhood and fertility have been proved in front of their communities.

Jewkes *et al.* (2001, 734) argue further that teenage fertility is infinitely preferable to the possibility of infertility in South Africa, as having children figures as a distinctive trait of womanhood. A similar point has been made in relation to Mozambique, where childless individuals are perceived to be incomplete (Andrade *et al.*, 2001, 32). Similarly, Runganga *et al.* (2001) discern the values and positive meanings attached to fertility by looking at reproductive failure in Zimbabwe.

Studies coming from a development background tend to rely on a modernist conception of the individual (Section 3.3.1). This entails a modernist schism between the body and the mind, whereby the body is the site of 'irrationality, passion and moral corruption [while] the mind functions as the seat of reason and restraint' (Bakare-Yusuf, 2004, 1). In this sense, young people are supposed to (want to) invest in their education and training, which will facilitate access into employment, before they have children. Yet, job markets may offer limited options in developing countries, leaving individuals with no tools for realising their aims and ultimately preventing sufficient appreciation of their agency.

Southern African contexts tend to positively welcome children, to some extent irrespective of the circumstances surrounding their birth. Children are so important that pregnancy and parenthood are considered rites of passage, where parents gain a different social status.

### *Pregnancy as a rite of passage*

Osório & Cruz e Silva (2008, 291) claim that in Mozambique pregnancy is conceived as a rite of passage regardless of the mother's age. Pregnancy determines an individual's position within the extended group, as it modifies teenage mothers' social status by

distancing them from their peers while strengthening familial bonds instead. Childbirth is considered, in other words, the ultimate rite of passage to womanhood, claim Preston-Whyte & Zondi in relation to South Africa (1992). A similar position is embraced by Mkhwanazi (2010), who looks at the management of teenage pregnancy as a form of transition rite in South Africa. This is to be understood in a context characterised by the weakening of formal female initiation rites, hence giving pregnancy a high degree of symbolic power. In this context, Mkhwanazi claims ‘a girl’s transition to motherhood presented an opportunity for both mother and daughter to demonstrate their adherence to local ideals’ (356) by fitting in with a gender regime that revolves around motherhood, and respecting the code of seniority.

However, traditional rites of passage would occur under the strict control and surveillance of older generations, who remained in charge of defining young people’s transition to adulthood (Junod, 1912). Thomas (2007, 51) reports that within the context of initiation rites in Kenya, one of the greatest breaches of morality and respectful behaviour was for an uninitiated girl to get pregnant. By the same token, in-school pregnancies often happen outside of parental approval, indicating a rupture in the traditional control older people maintain over the younger generation (Osório & Cruz e Silva, 2008, 277). This control is tightly bound up with the socialisation process young people receive in their families and then in the school context. Socialisation is intended as a hierarchical process that aims at reproducing a social order developed alongside the dimensions of age and gender: older people exert power over younger ones, and men over women.

Pregnancy renders visible the practice of sex for women, and reaffirms gender regimes in front of communities and social groups. In this way, pregnancy takes the role of rites of passage, which, as discussed in Chapter 2, tend to be performed less than before in Mozambique due to its historical development and a more general prescription for the modernization of traditional societies (Harcourt, 1997, 12). Pregnancy is then strongly associated with the different life stages of childhood and adulthood, in that it signals the transition from the first to the latter.

Childhood and adulthood exist *within* their binary opposition, while there is little agreement on their value as stand-alone concepts. As childhood is a temporary phase, its boundaries are constantly redefined in the relation with its other, adulthood. This opposition is rendered less striking by the insertion of adolescence, a concept coined in

1940 by the American psychologist Stanley Hall (1904) to refer to a transitory phase between childhood and adulthood characterised by conflict and risky behaviour. Arguably, the concept still carries this negative connotation. Adolescence corresponds *de facto* to the essentialisation of the difference between childhood and adulthood, which maintains traits of childhood, combining them with features of deviance and adulthood in aspiration. In-school pregnancy figures then as the liminal space between childhood and adulthood, a compressed teenage, or an extended rite of passage in which identity is moulded against the ideal type of the adult.

Macleod (2011) further contends that adolescence is to be understood within the category of ‘undecidability’, as it both excludes and includes childhood and adulthood (Macleod, 2003, 421). In the words of Macleod (2003, 426), ‘the pregnant teenager is thus adult, but not adult, child, but not child, an undecidable’. Within this perspective, a pregnancy during teenage years corresponds to a breach. Sexual practices and pregnancy are in fact behaviours associated with the realm of adulthood. As a consequence, their occurrence during a transitional phase can only be understood in terms of a ‘general problem-behaviour syndrome that includes illicit drug use and drinking’ (Musick, 1993, 53), or as a deviance (Lawson, 1993, 105).

### *Pregnancy and sexuality*

Current theoretical understandings of African sexualities are largely underdeveloped (Dunne, 2008; Undie & Benaya, 2006). Most studies tend to rely upon two main discourses framing sexuality in general and young people in particular (Coovadia *et al.*, 2009; Jewkes *et al.*, 2009): a discourse that inherently essentialises local, pre-colonial sexuality, and a second that aims at containing sexuality within the religious framework of Christianity<sup>21</sup>. The first of these discourses, connected to colonial understandings and anthropological accounts of indigenous sexuality carries with it an openness towards sex, which is seen as normal and healthy at all ages, and which can be freely spoken of. Sex is not a private matter, and as such, it is subject to some forms of regulation, usually entailing a degree of control of older generations over the younger ones. Pregnancy follows the same rules as it is considered an outcome of sex: it is generally well received, although heavily regulated by traditional institutions (Coovadia *et al.*, 2009).

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<sup>21</sup> Christianity refers to the context of this study. Other parts of Africa may well reflect other religious discourses.

In South Africa, for instance, children are viewed as belonging to the extended family group; hence childrearing burdens are shared within a number of members (Jewkes *et al.*, 2009, 676), regardless of the age of the mother. This position is highly insightful as it both establishes some continuity with the local context, and identifies individuals as agents. Yet, it remains a marginal position just recently developed, while dominant understandings of teenage pregnancy follow different routes. For instance, valuing pregnancy outside of wedlock may be at odds in contexts more formally influenced by dominant Christian or Western understandings of sexuality, which seek to confine sex to wedlock and procreation, limiting its legitimate practice to certain age groups and silencing talk about it in public communication (Delius & Glaser, 2002). Schools, as Western institutions, often reproduce this approach and heavily disapprove of teenage pregnancy through the application of exclusionary or re-entry policies which ‘disable girl mothers, thus perpetuating subtle forms of violence against them’ (Chilisa, 2002, 22).

However, the emergence of Christian-rooted moral discourses of sexuality – which have interlocked with more recent disease-rooted discourses such as those relating to STDs - have had limited influence on behavioural change in Southern Africa, as out-of-wedlock sex and pregnancies have continued to occur. Moreover, Christianity, alongside other events discussed in Chapter 2<sup>22</sup>, has contributed to a weakening of traditional institutions that control and regulate sex and fertility, thus increasing the number of unwanted pregnancies and rendering premarital and teenage pregnancy the norm for many African women (Coovadia *et al.*, 2009; Delius & Glaser, 2002; Jewkes *et al.*, 2009).

As a consequence of both pre-colonial and religious traditions, African sexuality has been essentialised as ‘unbridled’, ‘excessive’, ‘threatening and contagious’ (Arnfred, 2004d, 67), and has remained mainly unchanged within development discourses. This misrepresentation of African sexuality as ‘hyper’ comes from the clash between Colonial/Christian discourses and representations of indigenous sexualities. Because the former belongs to those traditionally in charge of producing knowledge, colonial views of local sexualities have monopolised research in this field.

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<sup>22</sup> Namely, Portuguese colonisation, Independence war and socialist attempts, and more recently, development agendas.



African hyper-sexuality is associated with fears of hyper-fertility discussed in Section 3.1.3 in relation to demographic fears of overpopulation, of which teenage pregnancy may be a 'symptom'.

### *Medicalisation of pregnancy*

I have discussed the connections between sexuality, pregnancy and the medical field in Section 3.2.1. These are particularly relevant for countries with a high HIV/AIDS prevalence, such as Mozambique, where overall HIV prevalence in 2009 was 11.5%, rising to 18.4% for women living in the urban areas (Instituto Nacional de Saúde (INS) *et al.*, 2010). Research on sex and sexuality has also been co-opted by the need to enhance knowledge of STDs and HIV in particular. Similarly, most of the studies carried out in Mozambique do not look directly at teenage pregnancy, which continues to be addressed only peripherally or within broader concerns about the spreading of HIV/AIDS. For this reason they tend to focus on young people in order to understand what prevents them from adopting measures against the risks entailed by unsafe sex (Machel, 2001; Manuel, 2005).

In Mozambique, Groes-Green (2009a) has provided a critical contribution by emphasising clashes between local and Western conceptualisations of sexuality and sexual health, which offer a visible disconnect between Western development discourses revolving around the concept of risk and danger, and local sexual slang, which is instead constructed around ideas of pleasure. An emphasis on the analytical dimension of risk for understanding sexuality however remains dominant, with only a few recent attempts at complementing that notion with others such as that of pleasure (Manuel, 2008).

In this sense, these studies remain anchored to Western values and beliefs and fail to investigate why it is that young people become parents. In other words, recent studies remain informed by a desire to further knowledge on how practices of modernity develop. By so doing, they overlook the extent to which individuals and communities may also strive to maintain some continuity with traditional institutions and values. The present study of teenage pregnancy thus aims to look at how traditional institutions evolve alongside the development of new practices and meanings with that belief that both modernity and tradition are not mutually exclusive perspectives, but intertwining processes.

A good way to consider these intertwining processes is to review studies that allow for this.

### *Pregnancy and Intersectionality*

In Southern Africa the intersection of three specific discourses encourages the positioning of teenage pregnancy as an outcome of structural limitations. First, there are strong cultural prescriptions for girls to date older men (Hof & Richters, 1999; Hoffman *et al.*, 2006), mainly due to the institution of *lobolo* (dowry), which required – and in many cases still does – a number of years of saving money. Second, a context characterised by socioeconomic deprivation may curtail the options people have at their disposal. Third, a social structure characterised by gender imbalances may worsen the predicament of women who are often powerless even with regards to their own bodies. Taking these three factors together, teenage pregnancy has been understood as a consequence of economic disadvantage which encourages young women to date older men as they may be more likely to have a stable income and, thereby, to contribute to the girl's maintenance and that of her family (Hoffman *et al.*, 2006; Jewkes *et al.*, 2009).

Luke (2003) further suggests interpreting transactional sexual relationships as a development of previous connections between relationships and money/goods transfer, such as the *lobolo*. The difference, Luke maintains (68), is in the fact that

*[...] cash and gifts have increasingly entered into informal sexual relations, and the negotiating parties are more likely individual men and young females than parents and families.*

Luke seems however to suggest that individuals and the family are mutually exclusive in the management of the financial aspects of a relationship, while the two parties seem to be in charge of different phases of the relationship.

However, considering transactional relationships as solely an outcome of poverty and deprivation offers only a partial perspective on the lack of negotiating power stemming from the intersection of poverty with gender imbalances. Instead, transactional sex may be both an outcome of deprivation and a strategy to resist it. Girls, in other words, are not only passive victims of their socioeconomic context, but active agents engaging in transactional sex as a 'strategy by which they are able to reverse the existing balance of

gender and power relations' (Hawkins *et al.*, 2005, iv). Moreover, by combining the two dimensions of transactional sex and intergenerational sex, some girls may resist the more oppressive aspects of poverty and patriarchal relations, manipulating them in order to achieve their own aims. These are the conclusions brought forth by Masvawure (2010), who looks at the diverse strategies implemented by young women attending university in Harare (Zimbabwe) in order to reap the benefits of a relationship with an older and wealthier man. These, in turn, may be quite varied, ranging from social recognition and empowerment, financial security, independence and respect, among others.

Such a perspective suggests that some girls may in fact have considerable negotiating power over certain aspects of their relationships with older men, namely the formation and continuation of the relationship itself. Yet, in order to reap the benefits of such partnerships, they may have to accept higher degrees of sexual risk, such as forgoing condom use and developing a higher acceptance of violent behaviours (Luke, 2003, 67). In return, sexual relations with older men may offer increased reliability, better financial support and higher chances of formalising the relationship in marriage. Yet in practice, many men refuse paternity and subsequently break relations, failing to support their children and former partners (Wood *et al.*, 1998).

In this section I have considered the main perspectives framing in-school pregnancy in Southern Africa. By so doing I have identified a movement swinging between a mainstream 'culture of silence' (Kolawole, 2004, 251) which portrays women as victims, and more recent attempts at conceptualising women's power and agency. Most importantly, in this section I have emphasised the associations between pregnancy and identities. I will now turn to theorisations of the latter, with a view to producing a theoretical framework for this study.

### 3.3 Identities

In the review of the literature above I have emphasised the connections between different representations of in-school pregnancy and their impact upon (individual) identities. I now wish to focus on the concept of identities, tracing it back to the beginning of this chapter. More specifically, I engage more clearly and more directly with the conceptualisation of the subject brought forward by the problematisation of in-

school pregnancy, which I argue has its roots in a modern definition of the subject. I draw on the limitations of this conceptualisation to adequately theorise identity in relation to both a context of development, and the case of in-school pregnancy. Thinking in this way has led me to post-modern theorisations, which I discuss in Section 3.3.2. Lastly, I draw the discussion back to Mozambique, proposing a theoretical framework that substantially relies on post-structural notions of discursive constructions of identities, but is also sensitive to local structures and meaning, alongside the specific historical development of Mozambique.

### 3.3.1 The Modern Subject

What are the problems with teenage mothers? The following quote provides a succinct summary (United Nations, 1994):

*Motherhood at a very young age entails a risk of maternal death that is much greater than average, and the children of young mothers have higher degrees of morbidity and mortality. Early childbearing continues to be an impediment to improvements in the educational, economic and social status of women in all parts of the world. Overall for young women, early marriage and early motherhood can severely curtail educational and employment opportunities and are likely to have a long-term, adverse impact on their and their children's quality of life.*

What conception of the subject underpins this excerpt from the International Conference on Population and Development? Medical risks and the curtailment of individual improvements - such as education and employment - frame early pregnancy in such negative terms that it seems impossible to think that individuals would want to pursue it willingly. These assumptions invoke the conception of the subject developed during the Enlightenment.

‘Enlightenment – writes Kant (1784) - is man's (*sic.*) emergence from his self-incurred immaturity’. Enlightenment is thus a movement, a project of leaving one's childhood behind in the progression to a fully developed adulthood. Childhood and adulthood are not fully unpacked, but their relation of opposition is mirrored by other sets of dichotomies, such as emotion and reason, and tradition and modernity. By identifying the Enlightenment with this internal development, Kant reifies the extremes delimiting

the breadth of such a movement. Childhood and adulthood, rationality and emotion, tradition and knowledge become thus to *exist*.

If each term is defined in opposition to its other, the issue remains: who is the subject of the Enlightenment? According to Macleod (2011, 24):

*The overlapping of the tale of individual development and of cultural evolution means the privileging of the white, middle-class heterosexual adult male – the rational person towards whom the ‘adolescent’ is developing – is implicitly the civilized person.*

This white, middle-class heterosexual adult male is thus the civilised subject of the Enlightenment. Because he is male, women are left in a position of marginality, reigned by emotions and foreign to the use of reason, with the added complication that their identity remains a condition of eternal becoming, as they will never become male. The subject of the Enlightenment is also white, establishing a primacy of the West over the Global South, and a parallelism between the transition to adulthood, and to civilisation (Hall, 1904).

This conception of the subject runs through theories of modernisation, together with wider progressive agendas, the supremacy of Western values and the rejection of tradition. Modernisation theories developed in the 1950s informed by tenets of the Enlightenment and by Durkheimian polarisations between traditional and modernised societies, according to which societies develop from simpler, *traditional* forms to increasingly complex sets of inter-relations (Durkheim, 1893). This process was assumed to happen through western phases of industrialisation, which then triggered diversification in different sectors, such as technology, politics or social relations. Modernity has come to be understood as a social system characterised by rationality, a mainly urban population, universal literacy and increasing reliance on science and technology (Dube, 1988, 17). Similarly, the modern self believes in linear progress, which is associated with economic development, and with a sense of universality (Bernstein, 1971). This assumes that all countries are en route to economic development, and that no country will remain anchored to its traditional structure, reinforcing the binary and hierarchical opposition tradition/modernity.

Many criticisms have been produced in response to theories of modernisation, and Bernstein (1971) provides an overview of their limitations. For example, modernisation

theories put the West in a position of clear hierarchical superiority over the rest of the world as structures emerging there are universalised by means of an implicit Eurocentrism (Bhabra, 2007). If progress is to be intended as a linear progression, and if developed countries happen to be *ahead*, developing countries are necessarily followers and as such dependent on following the path already set. Even though more recent conceptualisations of modernisation theories tend to recognise the multi-linearity of development processes (Dube, 1988), a firm belief in homogenising trends is still present. Modernisation, in this sense, corresponds to a process of westernisation (*ibid.*), in that social and cultural features of Europe and North America become normative. The development of mass education and assumptions about particular fertility patterns are notable aspects of this process of westernisation, as well as an emphasis on the individual as a decision-making subject, taken in opposition to traditional societies where the individual is represented as a passive executor of social goals (Dube, 1988, 19).

The modern subject is repeatedly invoked through the studies reviewed above. More or less implicit assumptions include: first, that teenage pregnancy represents a problem; second, that its extent requires strong action; and last, that its solution is to be found within the fields of education and employment. In this sense, teenage pregnancy is seen as an obstacle towards the preparation of young people for fitting into society through education and employment (Chevalier & Viitanen, 2003). Moreover, the modern subject heavily relies on hierarchical oppositions, such as childhood/adulthood and male/female, in which institutions such as schools tend to categorise individuals as pupils or teachers. Yet, these oppositions do not leave any space for individual agency in shaping what each category means to young people. I assert that post-modern conceptualisations of the subject may be more conducive in offering space for nuances in the theorisation of identities.

### 3.3.2 The Post-Modern Subject

Modern subjects are strongly positioned as being in control of their context and able to define their own trajectory in life. The Enlightenment rests upon an epistemology that defines truth as singular and objective. Science, in other words, is a discourse that presents itself as (a regime of) truth (Foucault & Gordon, 1980, 112), turning ‘truth’ into a natural, self-evident category. Yet, to grant each individual such a strong sense of

personhood would necessarily entail a pluralism of subjectivities, to the detriment of an objective regime of truth. A consequence of this reconsideration is a weakening of the subject which is entangled in webs of meaning that are much wider than they are. These webs of meaning are what Foucault referred to as discourses, which are responsible for making both the self and the world intelligible and knowable. As Hall (1996, 10) puts it:

*The subject is produced 'as an effect' through and within discourse, within specific discursive formations, and has no existence, and certainly no transcendental continuity or identity from one subject position to another.*

It is through language, and practices of meaning that subjects are made into what they are, and yet they do not exist beyond those very same structures. The process of constituting the subject through discourses, *subjectification*, relies on the workings of forms of power that do not emanate from a single source, but which are diffuse. Foucault (1977) identifies these workings of power as 'disciplines' or 'technologies' aimed at regulating selves in docile bodies. It is this docility, this inscription of individuals within preordained webs that becomes necessary for forming individual identity.

This theoretical position allows the analysis of the role of specific discourses of in-school pregnancy in particular contexts, moving away from the tendency to essentialise it, which is typical of modern approaches. A post-modern epistemological stance alerts us to how our ways of being and doing are framed by different historically contingent regimes of truth. The risk here is not to essentialise social facts, but to reify discourses. Foucault has subsequently been criticised for limiting the possibility of individual agency (Ramazanoglu, 1993), as individuals seem to be entangled and imprisoned within webs of meaning. Yet, Foucault does not deny the possibility of either agency or resistance, but simply inscribes these possibilities within discursive practices (Foucault & Gordon, 1980). Discourse 'is neither uniform nor stable' (Foucault, 1979, 100), and the possibility of contestation is integral to its own nature. Power and resistance, in other words, are two sides of the same coin (Foucault, 1979, 95):

*Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power.*

Pickett (1996) further explains that resistance is what eludes and threatens power, while being at the same time a potential source of power. Complete subjectification, complete

docility, is never achieved, providing continual scope to the workings of power. It is for this reason that resistance and power are tightly interwoven within processes of subjectification and why it is impossible to disentangle one from the other. I will further this aspect in Chapter 7, as I discuss how young people resist regulatory frameworks.

Foucault's discursive constitution of the subject is a starting point for Judith Butler in her elaboration of the self as performative. Following Foucault, Butler contests the modern essentialised view of the subject as a coherent and rational entity and instead identifies subjectification as 'a process which takes place within specific historical contexts and discursive regimes' (Taylor, 2011, 826). In other words, identity is not a performance, as that would imply a certain degree of volition that does not render justice to discursive theorisations of the subject. The performance of identity is for Butler also performative and productive: the performative is thus defined as 'that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names' (Butler, 1993, 13).

This perspective is very powerful. It means, for instance, that certain descriptions of teenage pregnancy not only describe it, but constitute it. If, in modern words, in-school pregnancy is an offence to the powers of reason and planning, then young mothers are described as feeble-minded, deviant and incomplete. Shifting from this conception of the subject to a post-modern perspective shifts the attention from the object to the processes which constitute it into an object of enquiry. The work of Derrida (1988) is particularly fitting in this context as he identifies dichotomies as the *modus operandi* of power. Binaries such as those identified by this study (modernity/tradition, mind/body, reason/emotion) define intelligibility but also frame domination and subordination while remaining bound in a relation of dependency. This intrinsic reliance on each other is what should be exposed and interrogated in order to open up possibilities. Politics and practices of deconstruction, in this sense, 'supplant oppositional modes of resistance' (Youdell, 2006, 40). Offering a nuanced perspective over the subject, Youdell (2006, 2) claims:

*Persons are not 'who' they are because of some natural or essential nature, some inner state. [...] persons come to 'be' 'who' they are by being intelligible within discourse, the bodies of meaning that frame social contexts. Impossible bodies and impossible selves, then, are outside those frameworks of meaning. They are unintelligible, they are not persons.*



Youdell identifies the rupture between the modern subject, made according to their biological nature, and the post-modern subject, created by their history, and rendered intelligible through the notion of discourses. Similarly, exposing processes implicated in the workings of discursive power entails looking at the micro-politics of power, everyday practices and norms regulating behaviour and thereby producing and reproducing discourses. Here, the process of subjectification is not only discursive, but it is also hierarchical as some discourses interconnect in setting the norm, hence in defining what is or should be the standard of normalcy.

An important dynamic of this theorisation is the notion of agency; if subjects exist within discourse, to what extent is it possible to consider their agency? If discourses precede and exceed us, as a play that begins before we arrive on stage, and continues after we leave, how is it possible to carve out a space for individual action, will or intent? Foucault's concept of resistance offers some insight, but resistance's inextricable interweaving with the working of power leaves little hope to young mothers for enacting change in the discourses developed around teenage pregnancy.

Butler (1990) claims that performatives require repetition and re-citation in order to sediment discourses. This aspect renders them unstable by allowing for the possibility of subversion and resignification. Taylor (2011, 827) further argues that

*'will' or 'intent' of the subject is always caught up in the discourse which produces it and exceeds it, and while 'will' or 'intent' must be understood as an agentic effect in discourse and not an essentialised attribute of a person, nevertheless the scope for acting purposefully remains.*

Positioning individuals within discourses does not mean robbing them of their agency, but instead requires an understanding of their nature from a point that is external to them. Unlike the subject of the Enlightenment, which privileges agency and the rational autonomous subject, the self produced through discourse is agentic, but not through the use of their rationality. It is through contingencies, and through a web of relations that goes beyond the individual, that agency is exerted. Agency becomes thus the 'capacity to manage actively the often discontinuous, overlapping or conflicting relations of power' (McNay, 2000, 16) while opening up the 'possibility for resistance, subversion and the emancipatory remodelling of identity' (McNay, 2000, 2).

More recent elaborations of agency (Kennelly, 2009; Lovell, 2003) have also suggested we broaden the spectrum and look at agency as a relational construct. This is particularly fitting as it would contribute to moving beyond the limitations of an approach based on ‘fertility goals’ (Section 3.5.1). In Lovell’s words (2003, 2):

*[...] agency lies in the interstices of interaction, in collective social movements in formation in specific circumstances, rather than in the fissures of a never-fully-constituted self.*

Agency is thus characterised in a more complex way, extending beyond the individual, within the social interactions they maintain, and within their broader context. This conceptualisation may offer very powerful insights in a postcolonial context such as Mozambique, opening up possibilities for an approach to the subject that goes beyond the modern, rational self to include varying degrees of interpersonal relations. The agency of the discursive self is thus a co-constructed agency which would also leave space for individuals to react ‘creatively and innovatively’ (Kennelly, 2009, 261; McNay, 2000) in ‘ways that may hinder, reinforce or catalyse social change’ (McNay, 2003, 141). As Hey (2006, 452) puts it:

*For me the idea of the performativity of identity as simultaneously asserted and ‘under threat’ in relation to its (ethnographic) Others creates conceptual–empirical space for elaborating how, and under what sort of conditions, subjects can come to cite themselves in recognised as well as unpredictable ways. This move to think performativity by paying more heed to the audience of the ‘we’ of our ‘others’ offers a powerful theoretical understanding of discourse as a social practice of identity.*

Post-modern understandings of the subject provide a very stimulating analytical framework for this study. At the same time, some nuances may offer limited applicability to the context of Mozambique. For instance the heteronormativity implied by discursive performatives leaves little space for the consideration of how multiple and often conflicting normative frameworks may coexist. Yet this aspect risks conceptual instability due to a shortage of theoretical constructs. For instance, by adopting Youdell’s approach, an in-school pregnancy that is not unwanted or unplanned would remain invisible. This would be due to the lack of a relevant discourse rendering it intelligible. I suggest that a combination of a post-modern conception of the subject and

of theorisations of late modernities may contribute to constructing a theoretical framework able to illuminate the dataset this study relies upon. Such a framework would allow to *see* the multiplicity of concurrent normative sets as well as the itineraries produced by individuals in the construction of their identities.

### 3.3.3 Itineraries of the Self

As I argued in Chapter 2, the history of Mozambique suggests an intertwining of different normative frameworks. A modern perspective would emphasise the clashes between them and inevitably place them in a hierarchical order. A post-modern exploration would instead illuminate the processes behind the construction of such frameworks and how subjects come to be within different discourses. This section aims to develop a tentative integrated framework for looking at the ways in which subjects concurrently invoke different frameworks – and thereby reproduce them – as they navigate different ways and means of constructing and performing their identities. It is with this in mind that Osório & Cruz e Silva (2008) represent the subject as a *traveller*, someone who shifts continuously between regulatory structures without fully embracing them (11):

*At this time in which modernity dominates, it also coexists with institutions and practices that are traditional, or which have been re-traditionalised.*

Change, in other words, seems to have become the only form of stability. For this reason the concept of liminality may prove particularly productive in illuminating the itineraries of the self. Initially developed by Van Gennep (1960) to systematically and universally frame the structure of rites of passage, liminality has then been rediscovered by Turner (1967), who expands the possible usages of this concept, stretching out to consider individual reactions to periods of transition. Liminality refers thus to the state of being in-between two different defined spaces. Individuals in this condition do not hold the characteristics of either, but stand at a threshold. Focusing on these liminal moments allows to consider for instance how agency functions (Thomassen, 2009, 14), as social structures and norms are in a process of change enabling a strong transformative potential (Bettis & Adams, 2005, 6).

Yet, if change is the only constant, then the journey of the subject is permanent and the two defined points delimiting the trajectory are idealised positions that are constantly

adjusted throughout, but never truly reached or departed from. This interpretation is not very far from Szalkolczai's definition of modernity as permanent liminality (2000), or a permanent phase of change that never sediments enough to give rise to new sets of norms. The traveller, or the subject, is made visible by virtue of this constant movement, which at the same time defines the contexts in which they operate. Letting go of the singularity entailed by modernity, this shift draws instead on the concept of multiple modernities (Eisenstadt, 2000), which suggests that the endless reworking of modernities is continuously giving rise to new interpretations of what modernities are and entail (*ibid.*).

This theoretical approach has been drawn upon to consider research conducted in Mozambique. Passador (2008, 2009) for instance, engages at length with the intricacies established by the nexus of tradition/modernity. This is particularly key within medicalised discussions and public policy initiatives aimed at tackling the HIV/AIDS epidemic:

*Both governmental and nongovernmental agencies and organisations have engaged in debates and activities revolving around the population's reliance on traditional medicine, kinship and gender relations, and sexualities, which are associated with a universe identified as 'traditional' and seen as fostering vulnerabilities to STDs and HIV/AIDS. (Passador, 2009, 687)*

Passador defends his use of quotation marks as a means to indicate that these terms are seen more as discursive and historical constructs than as objectively identifiable facts (2009, 688). At the same time, this use contributes to essentialising and reifying both tradition and modernity, preventing a critical engagement with both the origins of these constructs and their practices. Passador identifies the nature of the constructs as complementary opposed to one another, yet inextricably intertwined:

*[...] in practice the boundaries between these two realms are not so sharp, nor are they mutually exclusive when their elements are visible. This can be seen in the central village of Homoine, where there is steady movement between the city and the mato [woods], with these two universes constantly relating and interpenetrating, blending and merging; it becomes even more notable during critical moments, such as disease or death. In their relations*

*with these events, subjects are forced into constant contact with and movement between ‘modernity’ – characterised by biomedicine, its products and its institutional spaces – and ‘tradition’ which in daily speech is associated with witchcraft, the action of people and spirits, and curandeirismo (the practices of healers).*

Although Passador provides a thoroughly analytical consideration of this dichotomy, subjects remain surprisingly excluded by his analysis. How are ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ constructed? How do they impact on individuals’ lives? How do people make sense of them, or use them? What is their relation with individual performances of identity? Passador does not elaborate on the role of the subject in this dichotomy between tradition and modernity, and the modality of the ‘blending and merging’ between the two remain rather obscure. Passador does not exclude the subject altogether, but defines personhood by linking it with descent. A person is thus incomplete if he/she has not been linked to predecessors, or if he/she has not produced any offspring (2009, 689). Kinship – he proceeds – ‘defines a vital realm in person’s life, and alliances extend into non-family forms’. In this sense, identity construction is seen as a constant process and the person as a project (in a rather modern fashion). Yet, the dichotomy between tradition and modernity is exposed but not dissolved as Passador defends the primacy of tradition by contending that personhood is still constructed according to the logic of an enduring and encompassing ‘traditional ontology’ defined by the elements described above. While ‘modern’ components may be observed within this reality, it is the ‘traditional’ person who constructs it, replacing their ontology on a seemingly promiscuous mixture of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ elements (691).

Similarly, Honwana and De Boeck (2005) argue for a perspective of young people as both makers and breakers. Although novel in approaching a generally voiceless (silenced?) portion of the population, Honwana and De Boeck’s discussions are reminiscent of Bhabra’s use of the concepts of rupture and difference (2007), which risks missing out on the power of continuity. For instance Manuel (2012), in her study of young adults in Maputo, suggests that young people tend to incorporate existing social expectations and rules to their ways of being and socialising. Therefore, the new and creative interact with a continuity of practices, meanings and logics in complex

ways fomenting the dilemma that the young adults face in the search for stable relationships in the city (8).

Another layer of complexity is given by the extent to which both instances of tradition and modernity are taken to exist independently of the beholder. As Hall (1996, 4) argues,

*[identities] relate to the invention of tradition as much as to tradition itself, which they oblige us to read not as an endless reiteration, but as the 'changing same' (Gilroy, 1993): not the so-called return to roots, but a coming-to-terms-with our 'routes'. They arise from the narrativisation of the self, but the necessarily fictional nature of this process in no way undermines its discursive, material or political effectivity, even if the belongingness, the 'suturing into the story' through which these identities arise is, partly, in the imaginary (as well as the symbolic) and therefore, always, partly constructed in fantasy, or at least within a fantasmatic field.*

Similarly, Aboim (2009) argues against a conception of modernisation as a linear process, embracing instead postmodern views of hybridism (204) and of multiple modernities (Eisenstadt, 2000). The latter idea of multiple modernities is particularly useful in diminishing the gap between an 'ideal' homogeneous West and a heterogeneous non-West. This theoretical shift paves the way for new roles of the subject: modernity should in fact be defined as an on-going process, open to permanent reinterpretation and reconfiguration, in which agency plays a key role, which has to be taken into account whenever emerging of social plurality as portrayed (Kaya, 2004).

If plurality becomes the buzzword, then individual identity must follow in this constant reworking of itself. For this reason Aboim (2009) argues against coherence, for the recognition of how diffraction works within the project of identity. In her research on Mozambican masculinities she identifies a degree of complicity between the world of pre-colonial tradition, transposing into the modern world, but also one that is oriented by and to Western standards in both family life and gender relations. Change and continuity, in other words, coexist making it hard for one single normative hegemony to prevail over different regulatory sets.

The shift between the dichotomy tradition/modernity and the subject has been made possible by substituting this binary with an open-ended and fluid framework of multiple

modernities. This, in turn, has called for a consideration of how individual roles are to be positioned. I find Cleaver's notion of 'institutional bricolage' (2001, 29) particularly useful, as it encourages a consideration of the subject, moving away from modern conceptualisations:

*Rather than seeing people as rational and essentially economic-resource appropriators, we can reconceptualise them as conscious and unconscious social agents, deeply embedded in their cultural milieu but nonetheless capable of analysing and acting upon the circumstances that confront them.*

The notion of institutional bricolage allows thus to focus on people while recognising the structural limitations they are subject to, or their embeddedness in specific contexts. In this sense, Hall's (1996, 4) claim is particularly insightful:

*Identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions.*

Comforted and supported by Hall's insight, I aim to reposition in-school pregnancy in a fashion that allows for the conceptualisation of the way young people – girls in particular – navigate these 'often intersecting and antagonistic discourses'. Along the same lines Walker (1995, 436) argues that women's identity as mothers should be seen as embracing both resistance and complicity with dominant norms, suggesting that:

*Women's activist capacities and resilience in the face of oppressive institutional positioning exist alongside the centrality to their lives of the intra-psychic and unconscious terrain, which often produces women's complicity with patriarchal norms.*

This simultaneous complicity and resistance easily fits within a conceptualisation of multiple modernities. Individuals perform their identities by navigating different regulatory frameworks, accepting some norms as a means to exploit the scenario these norms enable and rejecting others as non-functional or non-viable. Or as Honwana and Boeck (2005, 11) succinctly put it:

*Young people exercise their creative power discursively but also in and through their own bodies, setting in motion a process of self-realisation and promotion of social status through consumption and expenditure,*

*appearance and fashion. This process is a matter of 'self-making', of capturing and 'fixing' the non-steady state of selfhood and identity in different cultural situations.*

Consequently I argue that disconnects between different regulatory frameworks enable individual agency. Exactly because both tradition and modernity are discursive constructs, they would not exist without individuals invoking or appropriating them, either at different times, or concurrently.

### 3.4 Summary and Research Questions

In this chapter I have discussed the boundaries of this study. I have set out the axis created by the relationship between development, education and gender in framing in-school pregnancy. This has allowed me to 'set the scene' for this study. I have then focused on teenage pregnancy, carrying out a tracing exercise with the aim of identifying the roots of its problematisation. I have then moved to consider the specific context of Southern Africa, where I have drawn connections between Western studies, and local specificities.

This review has led me to consider how in-school pregnancy is framed as heavily impacting upon individual identities, encouraging me to shift the conversation somewhat. I have connected the problematisation of in-school pregnancy to a conceptualisation of the subject which is firmly rooted in the Enlightenment, and modernity theories which ensued. I have further argued that this view of the individual is almost uncritically taken up by development discourses. The modern subject, constructed through dichotomous oppositions, does not adequately represent the multiplicity of discourses and normative frameworks that characterise the context of Mozambique, discussed in Chapter 2.

The identification of this gap is key as it defines the space for the development of the research questions driving this study:

- How do education policy and practice frame in-school pregnancy in Mozambique?
- How do families interpret and regulate in-school pregnancy?



- How do young people – young women – navigate the available discourses in the performance of their identities?

Engaging with these questions requires the production of a concise theoretical framework, which will then be used in the analytical chapters to illuminate my data. This combines the plurality of multiple modernities – particularly apt to offer insights into a postcolonial country such as Mozambique – with a poststructural conceptualisation of the subject. This combination allows the unpacking of the different dichotomies highlighted in Section 1.1. Moreover, it makes it possible to locate agency by looking at spaces of friction between different hetero-normativities. This approach suggests individuals may be regarded in a similar way to travellers, where the itineraries they construct, by means of navigating and invoking different sets of norms, become the trajectories of their identities.

## 4. Methodology, Methods and Strategies

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In this chapter I provide an overview of the research methodology I relied upon in analysing in-school pregnancy in Mozambique. The methods I chose are largely qualitative, as I found these better suited to exploring the experiences, and meanings individuals attach to social events in order to connect these to an understanding of the social world (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Within this frame, however, I combined a variety of methods in order to grasp the complexities of research participants' experiences.

In this chapter I reflect on my own transition from a modern, positivistic standpoint to a more postmodern one. In a way, this chapter embodies that transition by giving visibility to both positions. As the study design and methods were defined initially within that framework, I will still rely on a vocabulary that is underpinned by positivistic undertones. As this study progressed, from the generation of data during fieldwork through to data analysis and writing up, a clearer embracing of poststructural methodologies will become apparent.

I begin this chapter by discussing the research questions guiding this study. I then engage with the study methodology, specifying research strategy and design and explaining how these are consistent with the theoretical stance adopted. A brief overview of the research methods follows: interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and the use of fieldnotes, which suggest an ethnographic dimension. I then move on to consider data analysis. Section 4.3.2 presents the four different schools included in this research, while Section 4.4 discusses some dimensions of the relationship between researcher and research participants, namely positionality, reflexivity and ethics. Last, I look at the relevance of concepts such as reliability, validity and triangulation. Although these notions have their origins in positivist research and the natural sciences, my own transition urges me to consider them, endeavouring to understand them within a poststructural gaze.

## 4.1 Research Questions

The aim of this study is to explore the ways in which in-school pregnancy is constructed in Mozambique. In particular, the analysis will look at what discourses produce and are produced within such constructions, what normative frameworks they are associated with, and how young people navigate these in the performances of their identities. Ultimately, the study will aim to unpack the dichotomy between pregnancy and parenthood on one hand, and education on the other.

With this in mind, the research questions are:

- How do education policy and practice frame in-school pregnancy in Mozambique?
- How do families interpret and regulate in-school pregnancy?
- How do young people –young women – navigate the available discourses in the performance of their identities?

Question 1 aims to discuss the regulation of in-school pregnancy within secondary schools. It focuses on the text of the national policy tackling in-school pregnancy, decree 39/GM/2003. By carrying out a textual analysis I will look at how in-school pregnancy is produced through policy discourses, and what regulations are developed in order to normalise it. Engaging with Question 2 pushed me to look at how families interpret and regulate pregnancy. In choosing schools and families I recognise them as key sites for identity construction. Question 3 brings the emphasis back to young people – especially young women – in and out of education, and looks not only at how they are produced within discourses, but also how they resist them, and navigate them in the production of their own identities.

Each research question corresponds broadly to one analytical chapter. Therefore Chapter 5 engages with Research Question 1 and looks at educational institutions, Chapter 6 revolves around Research Question 2 and explores families. Last, Question 3 will be mainly discussed in Chapter 7. However, the inextricability of subjects and discourses makes it hard to achieve a neat separation of questions and chapters. Consequently, aspects concerning all three questions will be raised in each analytical chapter. For instance the analysis in Chapter 6 will raise aspects associated with schools, thus leading the discussion in that direction.

## 4.2 Study Methodology

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, 21) identify the research process as a logical procedural sequence:

*Ontological assumptions → epistemological assumptions → methodological implications → data collection techniques*

This scheme is somewhat reassuring for a doctoral student at the beginning of the PhD journey. Its linearity implies a consequentiality that leaves little to chaos. Although I now find myself in agreement with Dunne, Pryor and Yates (2005, 166) in looking at methodology as ‘dynamic, contingent, dialogic and context specific’, the rationality of Hitchcock and Hughes well represents my starting point. Traces of that are still visible throughout this thesis, and the structure of this chapter for instance, strongly depends on a methodological standpoint where each phase rationally and logically develops out of the previous, while similarly introducing the next.

In this section I engage with my position in relation to the ontological and epistemological set-up of this thesis. By continually referring to ‘where this started’ and ‘where I am now’ I aim at establishing a dialogue between these positions. This, I hope, will shed some light over the shifting methodological process, concurring with Lather (2007) that this can be a productive process.

My departure is with Blaikie’s definition of ontology as the nature of social reality. More precisely, ‘ontologies are concerned with what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up, and how these units interact with each other’ (Blaikie, 2007, 3,13). Broadly speaking, ontological traditions tend to position themselves between the two extremes of Positivism and Relativism. Schools of thought belonging to the former consider social reality as existing independently from the researcher, and made up of unities that can be observed through experience<sup>23</sup>. Scholars identifying with the latter, on the other hand, are more sceptical and emphasise the ways in which social reality is both local and dependent on social actors (Laverty, 2003, 26). Similarly, the idea of a single reality is rejected, to the benefit of the existence of multiple realities in a process of constant change (*ibid.*).

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<sup>23</sup> This tradition is particular relevant within a modern framework, as discussed in Chapter 3.

It is this second tradition that best represents my ontological assumption in finalising this study. Albeit embracing a category, I realise that this act of belonging plays out as an openness towards further complexities. If I accept to *becoming* through multiple realities in constant change, then I accept the fluidity of my gaze, and the necessary contingency of those ‘others’ I wish to represent in this study. I consider the nature of what exists to play out within individual performances of young women journeying in and out of education. Their connection with regulatory frameworks produced by institutional regimes and family regulations in relation to in-school pregnancy, and their resistances, suggest that *reality* or *truth* are contingent and dynamic. In this sense, in-school pregnancy is used as a prism: looking through the prism allows to glean how identities are constructed. Yet, the view enabled by a prism is not clear or linear, but multifaceted and diffracted.

Ontological perspectives are tightly interwoven with specific theories of how such knowledge is to be acquired, or epistemology. In Blaikie’s words, epistemologies ‘make claims about which scientific procedures produce reliable social scientific knowledge (2007, 18). Similarly to ontological assumptions, epistemologies can also be positioned along a continuum drawing from Positivism to Constructionism. Whereas the former indicates that an independent social reality may be accessed and known through sensory experience using the same methods of the natural sciences, the latter advocates a search for a different methodology, which takes into account that social reality is constantly constructed and negotiated (Bryman, 2001, 12-13). Constructivism encourages interpretation, as opposed to observation, as the main means to access social reality.

In this study I endeavour to grapple with a poststructural epistemology in that I seek to deconstruct a conceptualisation of in-school pregnancy produced within a series of dichotomous oppositions. I try not to define the nature of what exists, but to consider the processes through which particular identities are legitimised, while others are marginalised. I have tried to read research participants’ narratives of ‘being’ as ‘becoming’ in order to look at identities as constants fluxes polarising at times around structures of meaning.

#### 4.2.1 Research Strategy

In order to tackle the research questions outlined above, this study will adopt an abductive research strategy (Blaikie, 2007, 10). This strategy is mainly bottom-up in

that it encourages researchers to spend time with research participants in order to develop an understanding of how they construct the world by interpreting situations and developing meaning. Accordingly, research participants' voices have a prominent space in this study, as it is through those that their world is constructed and enacted. This way, abductive strategies encourage the depiction of a world where no single truth exists, but where events are continuously shaped through social processes of meaning-making.

Blaikie (*ibid.*) further develops his notion of abduction in social research by producing a fairly linear model in different steps. *Accessing* the social worlds of research participants remains the first step in applying an abductive strategy to research. Once lay meanings have been *accessed*, the researcher is challenged with translating these into technical descriptions of social life (Blaikie, 2007, 91), in what Blaikie calls a 'hermeneutic dialogue between first-order, lay concepts and meanings and second-order, technical concepts and interpretations' (101).

I have italicised the word *access* as it hints to a positivistic frame whereby there is a truth to be discovered by engaging in research. However, as I have moved away from this conceptualisation, I find myself no longer at ease with this vocabulary, and feel the need to define abduction alternatively. In this sense, I define abduction as a process of constant openness to construction, deconstruction and interpretation between myself, research participants, and the theorisations I position this study within. In this, I find comfort in Laws (2011, 15):

*The purpose of analysing the data is not to unravel and find a truth or even many truths. It is to trouble, to deconstruct the operations of dominant discourses on our everyday lives.*

Doing research becomes then a way to produce new ways of seeing and becoming through being and interpreting.

### 4.3 Research Design

This study relies on a multi-method research design aimed at carefully examining the research questions detailed above. Firstly, some time has been devoted to reviewing existing literature on in-school pregnancy, both in developed and developing countries. The literature review was carried out in order to identify gaps in the academic literature

concerning in-school pregnancy and, subsequently, to situate this study within the relevant context. Existing literature was reviewed according to what is already known in the field, what theories and concepts are directed towards an understanding of in-school pregnancy, what theoretical debates are ongoing in the field and what dimensions yet remain to be studied (Flick, 2009, 49).

In order to collect data on in-school pregnancy, two periods of fieldwork took place between September 2010 and May 2011, for a total of approximately seven months. This time was deemed appropriate in order to immerse myself in a culturally different society and feel at ease with its basic social vocabulary. This fieldwork was facilitated by a previous stay in Mozambique in 2007. Contacts developed then proved particularly useful, rendering my time in Mozambique more efficient. During my stay, in-school pregnancy was discussed with officials of the Ministry of Education (MINED), with headteachers and other teachers from four selected secondary schools and with young people attending (at the time of the pregnancy) secondary schools. In an effort to open spaces for interpretation, I also approached others who had a stake on in-school pregnancy, such as NGOs officers working on education and sexual and reproductive health, local academics and ethnographers carrying out research in Mozambique at the same time as myself. This combination of research participants allowed me to glean some insight over how different normative frameworks regulate the occurrence of in-school pregnancy.

Moreover, I engaged with my research questions by relying on a wide range of methods: formal to informal interviews, focus groups, secondary literature analysis, and my own fieldnotes. This study did not set off intending to be an ethnography. Yet looking back at the time spent on the field, and the level of immersion gained, it is inevitable to consider how it turned into an ‘accidental ethnography’ (Poulos, 2009). In hindsight, I believe that this variety heavily contributed to my shift to poststructuralism in that it helped to capture the fluidity of different conceptualisations of in-school pregnancy and to develop a ‘prismatic’ understanding of in-school pregnancy.

#### 4.3.1 Access

Initially, members of the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (UEM) were approached in order to establish a connection, and to gain access to local scholarship. This proved important on at least two levels. The UEM has a number of internationally renowned

scholars focusing on issues related to sexuality in the local context of Mozambique. Through them, I gained access to local academic literature on sexuality, relationships and pregnancy that would have been hard, if not impossible, to obtain from abroad. Furthermore, lecturers and professors in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology were able to act as gatekeepers by providing me with a signed letter, which acted as a formal introduction to the Ministry of Education (MINED).

Previously established contacts with an international NGO (Pathfinder International) were also renewed. Pathfinder is an American-based NGO providing individuals with access to high quality family planning and sexual and reproductive health information. To do so, it works closely with local organisations and institutions. In particular, it has close contact with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Youth and Sport. Pathfinder was able to personally introduce me to a key MINED official, who became my first interviewee. As well as countersigning the various introductory letters I required, he also introduced me to other officials within the MINED who were either directly involved with in-school pregnancy or who could be of practical help, for instance, by facilitating access to schools.

Negotiating entry figured thus more as a ‘chain’ (Kiragu & Warrington, 2012, 9) than a one-off event, hinting to the circularities and iterative nature of fieldwork. As this process unfolded, it granted access to a number of gatekeepers and potential interviewees. As such, it laid the basis for the sampling technique adopted by this study – a chain referral system (Bernard, 2006, 192) discussed in Section 4.3.3.

#### 4.3.2 Site Selection

Data collection started with the Ministry of Education, where it was first discussed with Ms Emilia Santos (*Direção da Educação da Cidade de Maputo- DECM*). Given that her work required close contact with secondary schools in the city of Maputo, she was able to suggest potential sites for research. Data such as the incidence of pregnancy<sup>24</sup>, the size and location of schools and the age of pupils were also considered in selecting

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<sup>24</sup> Schools are requested to collect the number of pregnancies occurring within their students on a termly basis. These are then forwarded to the Ministry of Education. However, data collection in school settings tends to be scant, as pregnancies are recorded by means of visibility of girls’ bellies. As a consequence, not all pregnancies are recorded. Some girls appear to go unnoticed (small or well hidden bellies, date of delivery during summer holidays, and so forth) and others negotiate to remain in day courses, hence their pregnancies, although known, remains off the record.



sites. Further to that, I had a second meeting with Ms Santos, during which she agreed to put me in touch with officers working for the district branches of the MINED. These would act as key informants in introducing me to headteachers of the selected schools, thereby enabling access to secondary schools.

A total of four secondary schools were selected for the study: one in the centre of Maputo, one in the outskirts and two in a semi-rural town two-hours away from the city centre. Spatial differentiation was not a requirement for this study, but it proved beneficial in that it facilitated immersion into different areas of the city and its ramifications. The first three schools were established in the 1990s as part of socialist modernisation efforts, while the other was a Roman Catholic school. Infrastructurally sound, all schools had quite basic facilities: big rooms with scattered chairs, desks and blackboards, and latrines for boys and girls. Drawing socio-economic information from school location may be problematic. Others (Groes-Green, 2009b; Manuel, 2005) have claimed pupils generally reflect the socio-economic background of the neighbourhood where the school is located. I suggest instead that pupils may have a preference for attending schools outside of their neighbourhood area (see Section 6.3) and recurrent migratory patterns usually mean that young people will routinely change schools.

Three of the schools followed similar routines: during the day there would be three cycles of instructions of four hours each, meaning that different pupil groups would participate separately in each cycle:

- Morning shift: 7am to 12pm
- Afternoon shift: 1pm to 5pm
- Night shift: 6pm to 10pm

Schools may also have different activities running beyond the school timetable to encourage pupils to spend more time in school. Journeys between home and school and back are commonly more than an hour each way, as transport in Maputo tends to be congested and pupils do not necessarily live close to their schools.

The following section provides brief descriptive introductions to each of the four schools<sup>25</sup>. Of the four, the first three are state-funded public schools, while the fourth receives some funding from the MINED and international donors, and is managed by Roman Catholic priests.

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<sup>25</sup> All names have been changed to preserve anonymity.

### *Central School*

Central School was a large, imposing building situated right in the centre of Maputo. Three floors of classrooms and offices neatly lined up against the messiness of the city, welcomed approximately 5000 pupils from different areas of the city. Headed by a woman, this school adopted a very strict code of conduct and girls who got pregnant or had children at home were irrevocably sent to night courses. Miss Antonia, school director, did not have any children herself and firmly believed that was the only way to properly invest in education. However, her deputy director Mr Benvindo did not share her views and tended to turn a blind eye to pregnant girls, provided they managed to keep their bellies duly hidden.

### *Neighbourhood School*

Smaller than the Central School (3,500 pupils), Neighbourhood School was some way out of the city centre. Stretching across the ground floor over a nicely kept garden, it was situated close to a big city junction, which attracted pupils from a large catchment area. Staff here were staunchly against transfer to night courses, especially female staff, who accounted for more than 50% of the teaching body. The School however embraced decree 39/GM/2003, and pregnant girls were routinely sent to night courses.

### *District School (semi-rural)*

District School had some 3,000 students and was the only secondary school in the area. For this reason, it also offered residential options for those who lived at a distance. However, at the time of this study there were only 186 residential students (girls and boys). The school was located approximately 2 hours from Maputo city centre and connections with the city were strong. Many teachers, as well as the head teacher, came from Maputo and were given free accommodation here during the week, returning to their homes at the weekend.

Night courses were offered just for grades 8, 9 and 10. If a girl got pregnant during grade 11 or 12, she was generally allowed to remain in her class. The school's plan at the time was to offer night courses for all grades of pregnant pupils, as this would have put the school in a condition of total compliance with MINED regulations.

### *District Religious School (semi-rural)*

Located in the same town as the District School, this small secondary institution (200 pupils in 2012) was the only one headed by a male. Father JL was Portuguese and had been living in Mozambique for over 10 years and in the district for 3 years. The Catholic agricultural school offered limited spaces in the residential college, but also welcomed pupils for day classes only. Classes were modular, in order to allow students to carry on with the rest of their lives, including work or agricultural activities. The school aimed to be self-sufficient as pupils were trained in agricultural skills *in situ*. Produce were either used by the school, which offered meals to its pupils, or sold to the local market in the case of a surplus. The school also raised chickens with the same purpose.

This institution was the most accommodating of the four in dealing with in-school pregnancy. Because of its modular structure, pupils could take time to complete their degrees as they registered for a module at a time. Pregnancy would be treated to the same extent as seasonality, as girls were allowed time off at the end of a module without losing what they had achieved so far, to then re-enter as they saw fit.

#### 4.3.3 Sampling

Research participants were recruited through the chain referral method of respondent-driven sampling (RDS), a technique well suited to reach hard-to-find or hard-to-study populations (Bernard, 2006, 192). RDS was initially employed with the MINED in order to gain access to those individuals directly involved with the making of policies relevant to in-school pregnancy. As the MINED is closely linked to secondary schools through the DECM, and since site selection was carried out in conjunction with the DECM, the same system was used to access selected secondary schools, and headteachers. These would act as points of contact between researcher and teachers, thereby enabling further access.

The sampling of in-school mothers was done concurrently through school reports and RDS. I would initially introduce my research to headteachers, then proceed to interviewing Directors of Pedagogy<sup>26</sup> and teachers: the latter would often put me in

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<sup>26</sup> Figures that work in-between headteachers and other teachers, they are usually teachers with extended tasks. These concern the smooth running of courses, and entail a closer relationship with pupils.

touch with young people affected by in-school pregnancy. A discussion of ethical consent issues would ensue, mostly opening a space for an interview or a focus group to happen.

Although schools claimed to maintain information on the number and identity of girls who became pregnant while in education, and although these reports were easily accessible<sup>27</sup>, the reliability of the information could not be taken for granted due to the gross methods of data collection employed (Refer to Section 4.3.2). To exclusively rely on pregnancy reports would have meant cutting out an important slice of the population, and thereby missing out on very insightful data. Yet, as this was the best data available, sampling partially relied on it.

Out-of-school young mothers tended to be harder to access as schools did not maintain contacts with dropouts, or, when they did, contact details had become obsolete. RDS was then instrumental in accessing these respondents. In-school mothers thus became chains within the referral system and were usually able to connect me to out-of-school mothers living in their same neighbourhood. A complete list of interviewees is provided in Appendix 11.

#### 4.3.4 Data Collection

Data concerning in-school pregnancy were collected through a total of seven months of fieldwork carried out in and around Maputo between September 2010 and May 2011, plus an initial period of three months between June and September 2007. The methods of data collection were individual interviews, focus groups, policy analysis and ethnographic immersion. Such methods were chosen as they either encouraged understanding through a relationship where people describe their world in the way that they see it, or allowed me, the researcher, to establish links and connections between various aspects of doing research. Combining them provided scope for overcoming the limitations of each, and for producing thicker description of the events relating to in-school pregnancy.

Research methods were used concurrently. This way, initial findings from individual interviews provided some thematic prompts to focus groups and could be partially

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<sup>27</sup> Headteachers would share this information with me as this research project was supported by both the Ministry of Education and the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane.

interpreted in light of group dynamics. Ethnographic immersion, on the other hand, provided an ongoing source of information, doubts and issues, which would then be expanded and clarified through both individual interviews and focus groups.

### *Interviews*

Dunne, Pryor and Yates (2005, 151) write:

*It is perhaps in the notion of narrative that we can dissolve the distinction between actual and invented selves, that a bridge can be seen between a modern conception of self and the postmodern critique.*

In line with their definition of narratives, I use interviews to explore how participants make sense of what happens to and around them. I want to discern the modalities of their meaning-making attempts. Starting from McGuigan's (1999, 80) notion of 'fractured identities', I am interested in seeing how participants suture their identities together while refusing to reduce the complexities into individual narratives.

The interview is a process creating a controlled situation in which the interviewer questions the respondent (Keats, 2000, 1). However, interviewing is also an interaction, and it is through conversation that we get to know other people and the ways they see the world (*ibid.*). An interview is thus a powerful method of producing knowledge of the human situation (Kvale, 2007, 9). This study generally made use of semi-structured interviews scripts, where the degree of structure depended on the respondent. For instance, some interviewees would easily share their experiences, while others required more specific questions.

The 10 respondents from the different levels of MINED generally preferred having specific questions, as they were participating in this study on behalf of their institution. When interviewing an official, I would first introduce my research project, and ask for their feedback on how I could best tackle my research questions (Interview prompts and schedules are shared in the Appendix 2 - 5). This part of the interview process remained key throughout my fieldwork as it allowed for constant adjustments of the research structure and for a more participatory inclusion of respondents in the research project. As the discussion progressed, I would shift towards discussing their perceptions of in-school pregnancy, including the reasons put forward and the contexts of its occurrence. Further to that, we would discuss ministerial decree 39/GM/2003.

MINED officials were forthcoming in providing feedback on their own interviews. I decided to send them back their transcripts as soon as I produced them. This was both a way to keep them included in the research project, and to prompt the scheduling of a further meeting with officials who tended to become busier as time passed. Only one asked me to modify – quite substantially – the contents of his transcript. Interestingly, the revisions suggested were aimed at changing the discursive construction of how decree 39/GM/2003 operates. For instance in the first interview the decree is described as indicating that ‘pregnant schoolgirls should transfer to night courses’. The revision suggested rephrasing it as ‘pregnant schoolgirls should remain in education by means of transferring to night courses’.

This event prompted me to consider how a specific time and place, the *hic et nunc* of the interview, may encourage the construction of a certain type of knowledge. Transcripts developing from such interactions may thus receive little consensus as the context changes, thereby highlighting how the transcript is also a construct and not a representation of an objective reality. Detaching the meaning constructed and shared from the interaction and context of the interview leads to distinguishing the ‘what’ of the interview, from the ‘how’ (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995).

A different group of respondents were teachers and headteachers, 20 of whom took part in this project, half from semi-rural and half from urban schools. Affiliation has sometimes been difficult to establish, given that many worked on double shifts: in one institution during the day, then teaching evening courses during the night. For example, Ms Nelia worked for the district service of MINED during the day, then taught Portuguese in one of the local secondary schools in the evening. Her contribution to this study has been recorded within the Ministry of Education, given that that was her main role for this research project.

These sets of interviews diverged slightly from those carried out with Ministry officials. Schoolteachers had direct exposure to in-school pregnancy and it was my intention to gather their individual experiences. For instance my interviews would generally begin by asking teachers whether they had had any pregnant girls in their classrooms. Given that all of my interviewees responded affirmatively, the conversation would then proceed to discuss these experiences, exploring further dimensions as the specific respondent raised them. Allowing respondents to raise the dimensions of understanding they considered fit permitted me to engage with underlying conceptions and meanings.

During my stay in Mozambique, I interviewed 25 girls who had a baby while being registered at school. Of those, 6 were out of school, while 19 were still in education; 5 were living in the semi-rural site, while 20 were city dwellers. A total of 18 girls were living with their families although they had children of their own. These interviews were aimed at collecting information about their backgrounds and experiences in relation to their pregnancy. I encouraged respondents to detail as much or as little as they wished, including, for instance, growing up, family circumstances, schooling, financial conditions, peer-groups and relationships. Events deriving from pregnancy and motherhood were also discussed, like moving households, relations with their partner and family and mostly, their relations with schooling and education.

A limited number of 8 boys/young men were interviewed. Their voices, although central, were much harder to access. This was probably due to my own characteristics of being foreign and female. Also, the men responsible for girls' pregnancies carried a specific stigma, as in the sites of this study they were known for shirking their responsibilities and ultimately refusing to support both girls and babies. Some potential candidates thus preferred not to talk to me, once informed of the aims of my research. However, gaining some of their perspectives in order to complement girls' accounts remained key. The pattern of their interviews was quite similar to that of the girls. Some extra attention was devoted to minimising the risk of their feeling blamed for their actions and choices. I generally found that once they felt accepted, they would easily share their views and opinions with me.

Lastly, I interviewed 10 older family members, including mothers or fathers of in-school mothers or expectant schoolgirls. In one case I interviewed a mother-in-law, as the girl I initially interviewed had moved in with her boyfriend's family. These insights were invaluable as they allowed me to consider the regulation of in-school pregnancy within families and communities.

However, relying entirely on individual interviews may be problematic. 'Voices' collected through an interview already present a form of interpretation that filters first hand experiences. In line with Jackson and Mazzei (2012, ix), I accept 'that the data are partial, incomplete, and always in a process of re-telling and re-memembering'. The notion of re-memembering particularly fits with my aim of working through the fractures of identities, trying to grasp the continuity of the process of suturing. Themes raised in

individual interviews would often provide insightful prompts for focus group discussions.

### *Focus Groups*

Focus groups are interviews with a small group of typically six to eight people on a specific topic. The explicit use of interaction to generate data allows focus groups to come closer to everyday life than individual interviews (Flick, 2009, 195). Focus groups have successfully been used in past research to elicit young people's perceptions (Jankie *et al.*, 2011).

Yet focus group research is not free from criticism. Group dynamics can take over and push the discussion away from the desired topics. Group dynamics may also mean that some individuals are more vocal than others, leading to the loss of some individual opinions (Flick, 2009, 201). A sound moderator should intervene in order to redress the direction of the discussion, although participation cannot be imposed, as it would run the risk of pushing individuals to elicit false opinion in order to please the moderator. Moreover, focus group research may challenge confidentiality as participants may share personal experiences with others, hence going beyond the researcher's control over the fate of such information (Culley *et al.*, 2007, 109). With this in mind, I reminded participants of what the focus group may entail and encouraged them not to personalise the experiences they wanted to share.

I carried out four focus groups with secondary school teachers, one for each selected school. These were with both male and female teachers and mainly aimed at discussing schools' positions towards pregnant girls. Eight focus groups involved young people; four were gender-specific (two with boys and two with girls) and four were mixed. By combining different structures I aimed to enable different interactions and to explore potentially diverse themes.

I adopted a dialogic approach in weaving themes raised within individual interviews with focus groups. Focus groups were particularly insightful as they provided both an indication to direct individual interviews towards certain angles, and offered some support in understanding specific situations in the light of socio-cultural dimensions, which I was not as familiar with. As such, focus groups offered a space to initiate data analysis.



### *An 'Accidental Ethnography'*

This study required an extended period of fieldwork. During this time, primary data were generated mainly through interviews and focus groups. However, the importance of months of immersion in the field cannot be emphasised enough. These included long hours spent in schools, meals shared with participants and their families, journeys between communities and schools and a more generalised participation in the social life of Maputo during my fieldwork.

These invaluable periods of immersion added an ethnographic dimension to this study, as they contributed to gaining the rudiments of the local socio-cultural language. Participating in local life was pivotal in order to 'understand the world through interacting with, empathising with and interpreting the actions and perceptions of its actors' (Scheyvens & Storey, 2003, 57). This degree of empathy allowed closer relations with participants, and brought greater depth to the insights of the research.

In practice, this meant that arranging an interview or a focus group in a school did not only entail the amount of time necessary to carry it out. Instead, I would go to school, hang around and engage in conversations, observe interactions taking place and enquire about actions or outcomes that were unclear. Similarly, I would, where possible, give a lift back home to research participants. This was not only a way to reciprocate and give a token recognition of the time they gave to me, but was also a means to further access their world and the relationships they maintained within it.

Such occasions were a very important means of understanding both social contexts and meanings. In addition, they provided a context less formal and structured than that of interviews and focus groups and allowed for a more direct sharing of information and a less contrived access to the social world of research participants. Data stemming from these moments were duly recorded in my fieldnotes, one of the methods of data collection deployed to the ongoing monitoring of the research process while *in situ*. Once back in the UK, fieldnotes proved key in initiating a meticulous data analysis, as detailed in the next section.

Data were produced within this study as a practice of equality (Rancière, 2006). This approach suggests that creating knowledge necessarily implies ignorance to a different knowledge. Ignoring the power relations between these different types of knowledge becomes then a way of asserting equality (Pelletier, 2009, 273). In this sense, I

approached young mothers or pregnant schoolgirls *ignoring* the stigma often attached to their position in the school. This allowed me to discuss a different story, that of the meanings they attached to pregnancy and parenthood. Likewise, I approached MINED officials and school staff with the aspiration to ignore the assumptions and rationale for transferring girls to night courses. Practising equality thereby offered a context to deconstruct policy implications with my respondents, blurring the boundaries between data collection and analysis.

#### 4.3.5 Data Analysis

This section engages with the process of transforming data into knowledge through analysis. Although data collection and analysis apparently pertain to very different stages of the research process, the two are not necessarily distinct in practice. Their convergence is best exemplified through the production and use of extensive fieldnotes. During my stay in Mozambique I produced a detailed account of my daily routines, specifying anything that could provide some background to interviews, focus groups or conversations. The purpose of fieldnotes goes far beyond supplementing memories, to ‘shape the trajectory of the research, and also to constitute an initial analysis of the mass of small encounters and events of daily life in the field’ (Harvey & Knox, 2011, 112). Writing fieldnotes was integral to my data analysis from the beginning of my fieldwork. The quiet moment of going through daily events would in fact stimulate initial analysis and drive the research process further, for instance by triggering new questions, different interpretations and understandings, which would then be shared with research participants in the search for clarification or to challenge existing views.

Similarly, the collection and reading of policy data cannot be fully distinguished from its analysis. For example, my initial reading of Decree 39/GM/2003 initiated a process of translation that was then carried out more formally together with one MINED official and a local NGO worker liaising with the MINED. Together, we produced a literal translation. However, we also discussed meanings of the language in use or the vernacular interpretations of the more formal language of the decree. This discussion was analytical in nature, and led to consider terms such as ‘wanted’ and ‘unplanned’ in lieu of the passive form used in Portuguese. In the same vein, we discussed talk of ‘punishment’ in association with the more literal translation ‘reprehension’. These points are further elaborated in Section 5.2 and in Appendix 1.

Interview and focus group data were recorded through notes, as this process is considered to be less intrusive than using voice recording devices (Bernard, 2006). I found that taking notes while listening to an interviewee, or focus group participant, was a good way to keep focused and reflect on what was being said on the spot. Writing forced me to consider whether I understood properly the stories being told, and if not, to ask my respondent for clarification straight away. These repetitions often identified disconnects or fractures in individual narratives, which I willingly left open. I converted notes in interview transcripts shortly after the interview, in order not to miss important details or to decontextualise them excessively. I used transcriptions as interpretive processes (Gibbs, 2007, 10) taking responses through a first stage of analysis. This allowed me to have some initial findings to discuss during focus groups. Similarly, some themes raised within group discussions acted as prompts for individual interviews.

Once back in academia, the plot thickened. I was suddenly confronted with the necessity of changing the direction of my analysis. I felt strongly that a change of context – from Mozambique back to the UK – required a repositioning of my work, and of myself as the author. I still attempted to follow through with previous plans of systematic coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994), aiming to define what data were actually about (Gibbs, 2007, 38). I then linked codes emerging from the texts into categories which I used to create clusters of meaning (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Yet, the mechanics of this process seemed somehow short in describing the emotional process of going through transcripts repeatedly in order to grasp similarities in conceptions and to build new understandings. While I was then convinced that themes would *naturally* develop out of the systematic reading and re-reading of transcripts and fieldnotes, I am now able to identify my position and implication in the development of such categories. My own narratives of myself and of the fieldwork had a great impact on the development of data analysis, and on the structure of this thesis.

Moreover, my own understandings and decisions with regards to which theoretical perspectives to embrace again did not develop out of raw data, but out of the dialogic interaction I established with my own transcripts and narratives of fieldwork. This entailed a continuous moving back and forth between analytical chapters and theoretical frameworks, a synergic activity whereby both sections are reinforced and contribute through one another to the development of the main argument. This method resonates with Jackson and Mazzei's process of *plugging in* (2012): analysis becomes then the

making of connections and the creation of an assemblage, where this ‘articulation is about making new combinations to create new identities’ (s5). At the same time, this process is not linear or unidimensional, as the multiplicity of texts or ‘literary machines’ (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, 1) is subject to a multiplicity of readings. In this sense, the analysis I carry out in this study revolves around research questions, and aims at providing answers with the understanding that such answers are both dynamic and contingent, hence never really settled.

## 4.4 Researcher and Research Participants

The field, as in ‘the locus of fieldwork’ (Scheyvens & Storey, 2003, 8) has traditionally developed as a series of binary oppositions (Clifford, 1997) which spatially characterises a place complete with boundaries and distinct from the researcher’s home. For instance, the dichotomous categories of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ are a consequence of this approach. Yet, current research tends to move beyond a traditional conceptualisation of the field, in order to consider it as a political, more than a spatial location (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997). Building on such considerations, I will proceed to discuss some characteristics of the field, intended as an interactive relationship between researcher and research participants in a specific context.

### 4.4.1 Positionality and Reflexivity

It is a specific definition of the field that creates binary oppositions that distinguish the researcher from the researched. However, more recent scholarship has tended to deconstruct this opposition by arguing for a consideration of the multiple complexities of shifting positionalities brought into play within the interactions of the researcher and their research participants (Merriam *et al.*, 2001). For instance Mullings (1999), drawing on her fieldwork with managers and workers in Jamaica, notes how insider and outsider statuses are often defined in terms of class, sex, race or ethnic lines. Yet, she claims, ‘there remains no unitary way to predict the impact of these identifiers on a research project’ (341) as they tend to be perceived differently by different individuals. Mullings further argues that identifying these uncertainties is key as it contributes to displacing the ‘indomitable authority of the author’ (349).

Although I remained the ‘token white woman’ for most of my fieldwork, I tried to bridge the gap by adjusting to different respondents. This was partly achieved by adopting the dress code that best suited the circumstances. So for instance, I would opt for a higher degree of formality when dealing with Ministry officials or university lecturers, than when dealing with young people. With them, my role shifted from being a teacher, as I was usually introduced by teachers; to being perceived as a slightly older sister, with whom personal issues could easily be discussed. At the same time, these different identities I felt were cast on me depended on the interaction with research participants in specific circumstances, and were by no means settled into one homogenous identity. In this sense, my own positionality reflects Mazzei and O’Brien’s concept of *intersectionality* (2009, 363), which recognises that researchers simultaneously overlap and diverge from informants. In other words, factors like race, gender, age and status can be both constraining and advantageous to research.

Even though I was not fluent in the local dialect, I decided against using research assistants. I believe this decision has been beneficial on more than one occasion. Firstly, my level of fluency in Portuguese was developed enough to ensure mutual understanding. Secondly, the themes raised, especially during individual interviews, were often sensitive and required a certain degree of empathic understanding between research and participant. The presence of a research assistant could have hindered proximity, ultimately adding a barrier of complexity to the research context. I have often found that making an effort towards someone else’s language equated making an effort towards their culture and expressing interest and admiration<sup>28</sup>. I believe this positively affected data collection. Being open about my language limitations was also a way to counterbalance power inequalities, as I welcomed advice and corrections from research participants in order to improve my Portuguese.

An important event that opened up new avenues for empathetic interactions was my own pregnancy, which started shortly before I began my second period of fieldwork in Mozambique. Although I was in my first term, between the first and fourth month, my belly was already quite visible. This offered a further dimension for sharing, especially, but not only, when I interviewed young women who had a baby. As this was my first pregnancy, I was ideally positioned to ‘look up’ to them, and to ask for advice in

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<sup>28</sup> When my partner (White, British, not fluent in Portuguese) visited me in the field it became apparent that his linguistic ignorance was not helping, as he was often ‘told off’ for not speaking Portuguese.

relation to both the pregnancy and the relationship with my then boyfriend back at home. This gave me the chance to introduce the topic of my research from a more informal perspective and thus access more personal considerations related to pregnancy.

Throughout my fieldwork, I carried out a number of smaller tasks for two NGOs active in the Maputo region. This was instrumental in facilitating access (Section 4.3.1) and gaining proximity to research participants. For instance, administering a questionnaire for a local NGO granted me access to the District School and housed me in a residential college for girls. This was an invaluable experience, as I got to share a room and food with girls attending the local school.

#### 4.4.2 Ethical Considerations

This research was carried out in compliance with the ethical guidelines set out by international conventions (Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and the Commonwealth, 1999; British Educational Research Association, 2004; Economic and Social Research Council, 2010), as a guarantee of its rigorous ethical standards and sensitivity towards the subjects involved and the topics addressed. Before fieldwork, this study gained approval through the consent process in practice at the time at the Institute of Education, where this research was initially developed<sup>29</sup>.

A first, broad ethical consideration concerns the appropriateness of conducting fieldwork in developing countries (Scheyvens & Storey, 2003, 2-3). A debate has flourished in the last 30 years questioning development fieldwork and suggesting dangerous similarities between development and colonialism (Escobar, 1995), such as those discussed in Chapter 3. These tend to rely on zero-sum approaches to power, establishing a dichotomy between the researcher and the researched whereby the first retains the power, to the detriment of the latter. However, these considerations are at odds with the theoretical positioning of this study, which frames both researcher and researched as interacting towards the development of meaning and understanding.

Carrying out research in developing countries entails that researcher and research participants may function according to very different frameworks of thinking (Benatar, 2002, 1132). The challenge is then to ‘avoid both ethical imperialism and ethical

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<sup>29</sup> Consent processes have recently undergone substantial changes. Although this study has not been assessed through updated systems, its sound ethical positioning has been confirmed through different means, both based in the UK and in Mozambique.

relativism' (1135). For such reasons, I strove to respect not only research subjects and their views, but their contexts as well. In so doing, I necessarily adjusted initial, Western-enthused ethical guidelines to local, respectful ideas of what is appropriate and what is not, in order to carefully balance power differentials by allowing research relationships to entail a certain degree of 'give and take' on both sides (Taplin, 2009).

The following sections address specific ethical concerns related to carrying out research on teenage pregnancy in a developing country. These will engage with current literature and guidelines to discuss issues related to carrying out research with young people, how to access them and include them as much as possible in the research; how to respect their views and their relationships with their peers, parents, guardians and their context at large and how to maintain their safety throughout the research process and afterwards.

### *Young People*

Young people are usually considered vulnerable subjects as they are 'potentially at risk of exploitation and/or of not fulfilling their life chances and choices' (Danaher *et al.*, 2007, 212). Consequently, some researchers are hesitant to include young people's views in their studies because of ethics-related fears (Flicker & Guta, 2008, 4). However, this study recognises young people's right to express their views fully in accordance with British Educational Research Association guidelines (2004, 7), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990). As a consequence, I considered young people able to give a fully informed consent even if under-age.

### *Informed Consent*

Although written and individually signed consent forms are often seen as the golden standard, they may not always be 'appropriate for developing country populations' (Creed-Kanashiro *et al.*, 2005, 926). Evidence from rural Ghana suggests that some research participants may feel suspicious of signing written documents, because of their inability to read what they were signing and because of previous experiences of being exploited (Tindana *et al.*, 2006). At the same time, the principle of informed consent may be generally strongly felt in developing countries (Hyder & Wali, 2006, 40).

Consequently, I adopted a greater flexibility in securing the said consent, without relying on the written form.

I asked participants to provide informed consent verbally prior to taking part in the research process. To facilitate this, I introduced my research in detail to inform potential participants of its purpose, methods and intended possible uses, what their participation in the research entailed and what risks, if any, might be involved. I understand informed consent as a process in which ‘consent is negotiated on an ongoing basis, and not be assumed on the basis of initial consent only’ (Heath *et al.*, 2007, 409). In order to achieve this, I gave research participants the possibility to provide feedback and discuss research aims and design during both focus groups and interviews. This ensured participants’ agency was continually acknowledged and respected. In this regard, I also used informed consent as a tool to preserve participants’ safety, for instance by allowing interviewees to drop out of the study at any point in time.

### *Risks and Participant Safety*

Investigating personal experiences connected with a pregnancy may elicit a range of emotions, some of which may cause distress. In order to minimise this, I made sure participants were aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, should they wish to, without giving a reason and without any adverse repercussions or implications. As a preventative measure, the interview would also unfold gradually and sensitive subjects would be brought up cautiously, based on my interpretation of the interviewee’s predisposition to discuss them.

Yet I found this concern to relate more to myself, or my Western background, than to research participants. Respondents, both in one-to-one settings and group discussions, quite easily discussed sexuality and pregnancy. Only one of my respondents reacted with distress to being interviewed as the conversation proceeded to raise painful memories of a recent, unwanted, abortion. On that occasion, I strived to limit the occurrence of anxiety by rendering the context less formal, and by communicating empathy through proximity. However, as my respondent expressed a desire to continue her account, I simply accepted that emotions are an integral part to research processes (Bennett, 2004), and as such should not be excluded.

### *Confidentiality and Anonymity*



Confidentiality of any information acquired and anonymity of the research participants was granted through the informed consent. Interviews and focus groups were recorded through notes, which were then converted to interview transcripts shortly after the end of the interview. All information gathered was password protected and stored on the researcher's computer. Participants' names and other means of identification have been changed prior to disseminating findings to protect research participants from any negative repercussions. I have also decided to refer to participants by their first name only, as to further safeguard their anonymity.

Breaches of confidentiality would have been considered if illegal or harmful behaviour was revealed during the course of the interview which caused concern for the health or safety of the participant or others. This also included risks of abuse, or being abused. However, this need did not arise.

### *Incentives*

Providing incentives to participate in research remains a controversial issue in ethical debates. On the one hand, money or other goods can be seen as forms of coercion to participate, especially when research subjects come from economically deprived backgrounds. Also, given the unequal power relation between interviewer and interviewee, incentives may seem to strengthen existing power relations instead of challenging them (Ansell, 2001). On the other hand, appropriate recompense for the time spent in taking part simply acknowledges that individuals could have engaged in other, more remunerative, activities (Benatar, 2002, 1134). In this sense, incentives seem fair and should not equate with coercion.

As a consequence, I made a priority of discussing incentive possibilities with key informants before initiating data collection. Incentives became the topic of numerous conversations with academic researchers and NGO professionals, triggering at times heart-felt considerations<sup>30</sup>. Trying to keep all sides of the argument into account, I finally opted for a flexible approach to incentives: if interviewing officers of Ministry of Education or related desks, I would try and see them during their working hours, as my topic was closely related to their work. If meeting them outside working hours, I would

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<sup>30</sup> Ms Hope, university lecturer, felt incentives were the main prerogative of Western researchers, who had means beyond local researchers. Hope strongly advised me against adopting an incentive system, as that would discourage locals from taking part in local research in the future.

invite them out for a coffee. The same happened with headteachers and other teachers. With young people however, it became apparent that they were making a greater effort, as they would stay at school longer in order to meet with me, or meet me outside the school grounds if out-of-school. In those cases, I always offered to give them a lift back home<sup>31</sup>, which spared them the long queues for the *chapa* (local semi-public form of transport) and often long journey home. If lifts could not be considered, I would pay for their transport back home. Also, I organised a party at my house upon my departure, where I cooked for those participants who could make it, went to pick them up where it was best for them and gave them a lift back home afterwards. Those times were not only a token appreciation for their participation, but important moments of rapport building, in which the research relationship became more relaxed, and research topics were addressed in a less formal environment.

### *Including Participants: Reporting Back and Disseminating Findings*

This study considers interviewees as active participants; hence they were encouraged to ask questions and to provide feedback, suggestions and advice with regards to the development of the study itself. In order to encourage inclusion, findings have been reported back to participants as the data collection proceeded. Initial findings from individual interviews would be used as prompts for focus group discussions, and likewise, some insights from focus groups would be discussed with individual interviewees at the light of their own experience. Further outcomes of this research, be they published articles or reports, will be made available to local institutions and organisations, whose contacts are being duly maintained at the time of writing. Moreover, an effort will be made to include the Ministry of Education as an important stakeholder, since the study may have some potential for impacting on existing beliefs and policies targeting in-school parents.

## 4.5 Reliability, Validity and Triangulation

Broadly speaking, reliability relates to the accuracy of research methods and techniques (Mason, 2002, 39). This concept has been developed in the natural sciences, where it indicates the rigour of a specific project, usually by demonstrating its consistency

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<sup>31</sup> I had a car for the second part of my stay.

(Lewis, 2009, 3), both internal and external. Internal consistency refers to the possibility of checking for stability in results by testing the same concepts by different means. External consistency refers instead to the consistency of results over time, hence indicating the replicability of findings.

Both internal and external consistency have their ontological roots in positivistic views of the world according to which there is a single truth, which can be tested, re-tested, and which will be conveyed again over time. It should therefore come as no surprise that such an approach to quality judgement in other kinds of social science research is a little controversial (Mason, 2002, 38). As a consequence, a myriad of new concepts have proliferated, offering alternative ways to evaluate research in the qualitative social sciences (Seale, 1999) or dismissing the concept altogether as irrelevant for field research (Wolcott, 2005). Yet, 'the issue of quality criteria in constructivism is not well resolved, and further critique is needed' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 114).

Among all the criteria developed to ensure a multi-method study's reliability, this study relies on authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). I have embraced authenticity in trying to convey the multiplicity of realities through participants' narratives, striving to represent the richness, depth and multifaceted character of participants' narratives, and the location of these within a wider social context. Accordingly, this research develops as a collection of different perspectives on in-school pregnancy, each contributing to conveying prismatic, diffracted perspectives on the subject.

Similarly to reliability, the concept of validity stems from the natural sciences to indicate the *truth*, the extent to which an account closely depicts a specific social phenomenon (Hammersley, 1990). However, the same difficulties raised by the discussion of reliability could be raised here, as relativist positions suggest multiple interpretations of the same phenomenon pointing away from the existence of a single truth (Hammersley, 2008, 47). Within this perspective, the position of the researcher can be seen as dangerous by means of threatening the objectivity of the recount through their own subjectivity (Dunne *et al.*, 2005, 147). In this study, I have embraced the view that the researcher – the author – is tightly interwoven within the process of generating data and representing the world. I have recognised – and will keep doing so throughout this thesis – how I am made into the world I investigate, thus revoking claims to objectivity (Dunne *et al.*, 2005, 82).

A last concept I would like to discuss in completing the representation of my own transition is that of triangulation. Denzin (1970) introduced the concept of triangulation in order to overcome partiality of perspective. Triangulation refers to a method of data collection where ‘links between concepts and indicators are checked by recourse to other indicators’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, 199). In other words, in using interviews, theory, previous research literature, observations, and other data, findings can be compared to determine the validity of a certain theme or category (Lewis, 2009, 11). Accordingly, I relied on a combination of different methods in order to access different realities, problematise in-school pregnancy, and convey various avenues to understand it under different lights.

At a first glance, the need to triangulate data may seem to imply that there is one universal truth to discover, as multiple sources are requested to confirm the same views on a specific social fact. As a consequence, Blaikie has argued that triangulation ‘has no relevance for genuine interpretivists and ethnomethodologists’ (Blaikie, 1991, 131). Silverman (2001), instead, suggests that triangulation can help ‘to address the situated work of accounts’ rather than ‘using one account to undercut the other’ (158). This version of triangulation, then, refutes the idea of triangulation as convergence on a fixed point by encouraging a ‘view of research as revealing multiple constructed realities, something that triangulation, now conceived as the revelation of difference, is well suited to expose’ (Seale, 1999, 474). It is in this latter approach to triangulation that I find support.

## 4.6 Study Limitations

As with other-small scale qualitative studies, relying on non-probability sampling has important consequences for the generalisation of findings beyond the study population, for which further ethnographic data, or probability sampling would be needed (Bernard, 2006, 196). Yet carrying out in-depth qualitative research and focusing on a limited number of research participants gave me the chance to gain deep insights into the lives and meaning making behaviours of my respondents. This approach has allowed me to open up spaces for discussion and for making suggestions in relation to the management of in-school pregnancy in Mozambique.

Another limitation has to do with my language skills. Although fluent in Portuguese, I was not equipped in *Changana*, the local dialect, which is widely used in daily communication. I carried out most of the research in Maputo, where Portuguese is the main language and also *lingua franca* given the strong mobility from different areas of the country. This rendered my inabilities in *Changana* somewhat secondary, as I was able to engage in individual interviews and lead focus groups. At the same time, as *Changana* is often the language of slang and more private matters (Groes-Green, 2009a), I felt some basic skills would have facilitated greater inclusion in informal conversations.

Language limitations also occur in the translation of concepts from Portuguese and English. I decided to remain in charge of every translation in this study, as this allowed me to overview a translation which is rarely literal and mostly cultural or ‘thick’ (Appiah, 1993). This has encouraged me at times to opt for awkward usages of the English language. Such is the case of the verb ‘to impregnate’, used to translate the Portuguese ‘engravidar’. While the latter is perfectly acceptable, impregnate sounds somewhat odd to a native British speaker. Yet drawing on it has allowed me to emphasise the discursive potential implicit in words, as the verb clearly indicates who is active and who is passive in relation to a pregnancy, denoting a patriarchal undertone that is taken for granted in Mozambique.

Other limitations affecting data production are related to time. Regardless of how long one spends in the field, one could always do with more. This has to do with the constraints of the timetable. December does not only correspond to a Christmas break in a former Catholic colony, it is also the peak of the summer. It is very hot and humid, and most people find it hard to properly function. This, coupled with a state of incessant contingency planning, resulted in a number of no-shows, which can render fieldwork particularly frustrating and delay completion.

## 4.7 Summary

In this chapter I have detailed some issues related the research methodology. I started out by declaring my own transitory positionality throughout this study, which I leave willingly open as I finalise my writing. The transition between a more positivistic standpoint to a more poststructural gaze characterises the thesis, but is explicitly

identified here. In each section, I have tried to maintain that dialogic position between myself as the researcher and myself as author, profoundly imbricated in every phase of this study.

Accordingly, I have defined the ‘field’ as the ongoing interaction between researcher and research participants, occurring in a specific socio-cultural context. In this light, methodological choices have been discussed, with an emphasis on access, site selection and sampling. Further to that, I have discussed the research methods employed throughout fieldwork. Interviews, focus groups, ethnographic immersion, secondary data review and detailed fieldnotes were discussed as the main sources for generating data which were then analysed through the processes described above to produce this thesis.

I discussed my own positionality and reflexivity as a means to recognise the different ways through which I was implicated in the production of the research data. I have also used this to produce my own account of what reliability, validity and triangulation may mean for poststructural research. Last, I have reflected on the limitations of this study.

## 5. Regulating in-school pregnancy

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This chapter constitutes the analytical section of this thesis together with Chapters 6 and 7. In the analysis I will use in-school pregnancy in order to develop a nuanced picture of how discourses and subjects are mutually constituted. The three analytical chapters integrate and complement each other. This first one focuses on the context of the school, and engages with Research Question 1 by exploring the discursive construction of in-school pregnancy enacted through educational policy and practice. Chapter 6 will consider families as key socialising institutions offering another context for the interpretation of in-school pregnancy. Last, Chapter 7 will complete the picture by shifting from discourses to subjects: young people's voices will be used to understand how they navigate the education/pregnancy nexus, and the regulatory frameworks it invokes, in the performances of their identities.

This first analytical chapter engages in an analysis of Decree 39/GM/2003, the national policy prescription currently in use to manage the occurrence of in-school pregnancy in Mozambique. In this chapter I identify different discourses at play within the policy text and discuss the ways in which they interplay in the construction of in-school pregnancy as a social problem. Through this critical engagement - and by drawing on data and analysis of documents, interviews and focus group discussions with respondents - I will illustrate how measures of school effectiveness frame the notion of pregnancy-related dropouts.

I divide this chapter into four sections. In the first I position Decree 39/GM/2003 within both a historical and international context. This decree is the first policy that attempts to standardise the management of in-school pregnancy at country-level. Moreover, it can be interpreted through the lens of the international agreements the Government of Mozambique has ratified such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In the second section I focus on a discourse analysis of the policy, *deconstructing* its text in order to examine how a particular *construction* of in-school pregnancy has been put forward as dominant. In the third section I move on to consider school practices and the ways they are enacted as a constant surveillance (Foucault, 1977) of potential pregnancy. In the fourth section I draw upon the above discussions to suggest that the

concept of ‘throw-out’ (Luker, 1996) may adequately complement that of ‘dropout’ in accounting for young women who leave school due to a pregnancy. By so doing, I will ultimately contribute to an understanding of institutional regimes ‘constituted by complex discursive practices that produce and regulate heteronormative gender positioning’ (Dunne, 2007, 501).

## 5.1 Decree 39/GM/2003

The central aim of Decree 39/GM/2003 (a copy of which is offered in Appendix 1) is to discourage in-school pregnancy by punishing its occurrence. Pregnant schoolgirls are thus transferred from day to night courses. Where fathers are acknowledged as fellow pupils, they are to be transferred as well or, should they be teaching staff, suspended from their duties.

While clearly proposing exclusion from one form of schooling, these actions may be read also as a form of inclusion through exclusion (Foucault, 1994, 78). These provisions mean that pregnant schoolgirls are allowed to remain in education, provided they are transferred to an alternative setting. This practice can be illuminated by what Foucault refers to as ‘modes of objectification’ that Rabinow (1991, 12) succinctly summarises as:

*Taken together, the three modes of objectification of the subject (those that categorise, distribute and manipulate – the dividing practices; those through which we have come to understand ourselves scientifically – the scientific classification; and that we have used to form ourselves into meaning-giving selves – the subjectification) designate the problematic of Foucault’s enquiries.*

Transfer works as a practice of segregation, or a ‘dividing practice’, in that pregnant schoolgirls are removed from their classes and positioned elsewhere. Transferring girls to night courses is not just a strategy to deal with in-school pregnancy, but it works as a marker in the attribution of an identity. As night courses were initially developed for adult literacy, transfer symbolises a significant shift in girls’ identities: pregnant schoolgirls are no longer children, as their entry to night classes signifies that they are adults. In other words, transfer is tightly interwoven with an institutional regime that categorises individual identities as children or adults, but which struggles to make space



for the multiple identities and belongings, which will be discussed in Chapter 7. Through transfer ‘the subject is objectified by a process of division either within himself (sic) or from others’ (Foucault, 1982, 208), and it is through this kind of process that individuals are produced with ‘both a social and a personal identity’ (Rabinow, 1991, 8). The importance of space in constituting (children’s) identities has been suggested by Holloway and Valentine (2000) and furthered by Dunne and Leach (2007) as a means to distinguish those who are mainstream from those who are not.

In advance of exploring the construction of in-school pregnancy through the textual analysis of decree 39/GM/2003, the chapter will situate the policy in its historical and international context.

### 5.1.1 Policy in Perspective

Chilisa (2002) reviews sub-Saharan in-school pregnancy policies and distinguishes three kinds of policy: expulsion, continuation and re-entry. According to her framework, continuation policies are the most progressive, whereas the other two categories contribute to the reproduction of forms of gender inequalities, through limiting access to education for girls who become pregnant. The same author categorises Mozambique (at the time of her review) within the group of states adhering to rigid expulsion policies. However, Mozambique has since adopted a continuation policy, which enables pregnant girls to remain in education, provided they transfer to night courses. Decree 39/GM/2003 marks a shift according to Chilisa’s analysis and reflects Mozambique’s process of (wider social) transition. Moreover, it is the first national policy to advise on how to manage in-school pregnancies in Mozambique and has served the aim of unifying the country accordingly. Mr Paulo, a male official within the Ministry of Education reported:

*During the single-party regime there was no pregnant girl in schools. Before decree 39/GM/2003 each school had its own internal regulation. They had norms of behaviour, but in general, I can tell you that no pregnant girl would be admitted to any courses of any school in the country. This decree in 2003 established some progress. In itself, it is the first public policy developed at national level to regulate in-school pregnancy and its first goal is to allow for more girls to remain in education and graduate.*

In this light, transferral seems less of a punishment and more of a development of previous norms. For Mr Paulo, who has worked in education all of his life, the shift is extremely progressive and the current situation needs to be assessed against what it used to be, more than against the shortcomings it entails – Mr Paulo continues:

*[...] We have to insist upon issues of gender equality. You know, there are people who push for expelling pregnant girls altogether. For them this would be a better way to deter other girls from getting pregnant while in education.*

For Mr Paulo, transferral is a means to allow pregnant girls and young mothers to remain in education, thereby working to bridge the educational gender gap. Similarly, other officials tend to be proud of the existence of decree 39/GM/2003. Ms Emilia (DECM) for instance, recognises the improvement brought about in comparison with the past:

*This decree marks some progress. Before this pregnant girls had to leave school. But that would wrong those girls. So now they are allowed to continue with their education in schools, with night courses.*

Before 2003, institutions and individuals would rely on customary laws and traditions to deal with cases of in-school pregnancy. These, in turn, would build on traditional gender models situating parenthood within the household. Women who gave birth were thus expected to leave the classroom, and embrace a more housebound model of femininity. Decree 39/GM/2003 allows instead for a more nuanced approach to femininity, where pregnancy and schooling are not mutually exclusive in the definition of individual identity. Mr Mario, Director of Pedagogy at the Central Secondary School embraces this perspective:

*I think it is good, it signals that people care. That institutions care. It is a way to protect girls. See, getting in the chapa [semi-public form of transport] while you are pregnant is dangerous, because those minivans are always full and they drive like crazy. Have you seen them buzzing around at peak times during the day? Also, it is dangerous for pregnant girls to attend PE at school. That is why we have abolished that subject from night courses.*

Decree 39/GM/2003 therefore seems like a ‘rational’ response to addressing in-school pregnancy. On the one hand it marks some improvement from the previous custom of expelling pregnant girls by allowing them to remain in education and complete their degree, albeit transferred to night courses. On the other hand, the decree sends a clear message that pregnancy is not welcome within educational institutions and it will have an impact on attendance. Strategically, transferring girls to night courses also becomes a deterrent for other girls, by symbolising that a pregnancy will not be condoned. Ultimately, Decree 39/GM/2003 is an attempt to de-normalise in-school pregnancy, by reducing its visibility or limiting it to specific sections of the day, namely, those traditionally allocated to adult education. Overall, it seems to provide a functional operationalisation of MDG 2 and 3 in its aims and practical implications.

The adjective ‘rational’ has been chosen exactly because of its positivist underpinning: Decree 39/GM/2003 *makes sense* within a modern perspective. Yet, what looks like a happy consensus is however very problematic and requires unpacking. For instance, men are rarely penalised, and the indications contained in decree 39/GM/2003 in this respect rarely make it beyond the official act. This is mainly for two reasons. Firstly, men or boys involved with girls’ pregnancies rarely attend the same school as the girls, being often members of the wider community. Secondly, the men responsible for the pregnancy may work in the school as teachers, where they tend to occupy positions of greater social power than the pregnant girl.

Teachers’ involvement with schoolgirls is perceived to be very high in Mozambique, although there is no quantification provided by current literature. However, teachers continue to work unaffected by the decree’s disposition, even if they have been publicly recognised as ‘guilty’ (Arthur & Cabral, 2004) . This is possibly because the supply of teachers in Mozambique is limited and demand for schooling is high. Data from this study suggest that there may be a preference for not disclosing the identity of the fathers, indicating that girls may be in particularly vulnerable situation, but also that desired outcomes might be better realised if fathers are not known. Chapter 7 will offer a more thorough consideration of this point.

Decree 39/GM/2003 is problematic for other reasons as well. Although formally working as a re-entry policy, transfer to night courses may act as a highway to dropout, as I will argue in the next section.

### 5.1.2 Transfer or Dropout?

Decree 39/GM/2003 does not recommend the expulsion of pregnant schoolgirls, but the transfer to night courses. Transferring pregnant girls to night courses entails at least four problematic factors, which are key for understanding why girls tend to leave. The first has to do with public transport, as Zelia, out of school in connection to a pregnancy, explains:

*I had to leave the house one hour before the beginning of classes, keeping into account that I was going to get stuck in traffic somewhere. Also, I had to change buses on the way, which means that I had to wait and often do so by myself. That is not nice at night.*

Ermelinda, 19, from Maputo, tells a similar story:

*I do not like it at all, to go to night courses. Mainly because I live far away, I live in Benfica<sup>32</sup>, and there are not many chapas travelling back and forth at night.*

Night courses start at 6pm and last until 10pm. That means that pupils attending classes need to account for rush-hour traffic on the way to school and to deal with the scarcity of transport on the way back. Journeys back and forth between home and night school are likely to be more time consuming than during the day, increasing the opportunity cost of remaining in education.

A second reason concerns the increased danger of being out and about at night, as Lucia, 16, attending the District School points out:

*I would not have gone at night, I am scared to go out at night, there are bandits around. [...] If they told me now that I had to transfer to night courses, well, I would simply drop out.*

Similarly, Zelia, from Maputo:

*I am not lazy, so it was not hard for me to go to school at night. At the same time, I never had to go there by myself, as my boyfriend would escort me there and come and pick me up at the end of classes every day.*

And Ersilia:

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<sup>32</sup> *Benfica*: neighbourhood area in the outskirts of Maputo.

*I really do not like it, to go to school at night I mean. I live in Hulene, it takes me an hour to get there if traffic is light. The problem is, the traffic is never light. [...] Plus it gets dangerous at night. To be honest, I am not sure whether I am going to resist or not. I think it becomes very easy to drop out when you are going to school at night.*

Having to cover long distances at night leaves girls more exposed to the potential risk of being assaulted. Clearly nobody wants to be exposed, but pregnant girls may feel even more vulnerable if they cannot rely on being escorted to and from school as Zelia could.

A third factor is to be found in the quality of night courses, as Ruth, attending the District School points out:

*I do not think night courses are good. You see, they think people that go to school at night have other priorities in life, with schooling and education just coming second. Also, it happens quite frequently that the teacher does not show up. The structural conditions are not good too. You have seen how it is to live in the country, how many times a week we have electricity blackouts? If you go to school at night, it means you are always relying on stable electricity. When electricity is out, classes are out too. There is no continuity, no quality. It is very hard to get something out of night courses.*

Zelia confirms:

*The problem for me was the quality of teaching at night. There are not many subjects and teachers cannot be asked to express things to you properly. People make a lot of noise, and in the end, you are lucky if you can say you learnt one thing. It is more a parking lot than a school. Teachers have taught elsewhere all day, and they are tired. They also think that if you go at night it means school is not that important to you, that you have another priorities during the day, so why should they insist too much? The truth is, people may go at night for a whole lot of reasons, maybe they got transferred because they were pregnant, or maybe they just could not find a vacancy during the day, so they had no option.*

Teachers' voices are quite insightful in depicting a system that does not allow night courses to be effective. Teachers are often forced to double or triple shifts at work to

make ends meet at the end of the month, as Ms Antonia, headteacher at the Central School explains:

*I teach at night courses at a different institution. You cannot assume that when I get there at 5pm I am as fresh and rested as I am when I get here at 7am. Sometimes I am just exhausted. My students understand it, because they are probably exhausted too if they come from a hard day's work. This is what I mean by mutual understanding. We do not require as much of them, and they do not require as much of us. To be completely honest, sometimes I just do not bother going. When you know you are going to give a 10% of what you could, and they are going to grasp a 10% of your 10%... you start asking yourself some questions.*

Going to school at night entails therefore a number of difficulties that directly impinge on the quality of learning, such as structural deficiencies (electricity blackouts) and personal difficulties connected to both teachers and pupils. A consequence of this is the underlying assumption that school is not among your top priorities if you attend at night; hence efforts on both sides (teachers and pupils) are more the exception than the norm.

A fourth factor leading girls to leave school has to do with not having anyone to leave the baby with in that specific time slot, as happened to Ersilia:

*I think it will be even more difficult to go to school at night when the baby is here. Who would I leave the baby with? My mum works at the market and she comes back home at 7.30pm. I cannot rely on her for looking after the baby because I have to be at school at 5.45pm. It would be much easier during the day because I would easily find somebody... a relative, or a neighbour for instance.*

Childrearing responsibilities are usually shared within the extended network. As the concept of a nuclear family makes little sense in Mozambique (Section 2.4), no couple would be expected to raise their children independently from their extended family. However the time slot night courses require presents some difficulties, as it is too early to leave the baby with those who work during the day and too late to leave her/him with those that have not worked and who have to look after their own family members, as extended family members are also navigating work and life patterns in different ways.

To sum up: for the pregnant girls who get transferred, attendance at night school can be difficult. In addition, as night courses were ideally developed for adult literacy in order to give opportunities to those who did not attend as children, there is likely to be a substantial age gap between classmates, making it more difficult to integrate and create a feeling of community in the classroom. For these reasons, the boundaries between transfer and expulsion are blurred, and the risk of dropout implied in a transfer cannot be overlooked.

In this section I have positioned in-school pregnancy policy within a historical and international context. Using Chilisa's framework (2002) I have emphasised a certain degree of continuity in the opposition between education and pregnancy in Mozambique. At the same time, Decree 39/GM/2003 marks an important and progressive change that makes provision to extend rather than terminate the education of pregnant females. This change can be seen in association with international agreements signed and ratified by the Government of Mozambique. Yet, transfer to night courses has been used as an identity marker that works to symbolise the transition between childhood and adulthood. Moreover, attending night courses can be extremely problematic, acting *de facto* as a highway to dropout. I will now look closely at the policy text in order to tease out the main discourses that contribute to constructing in-school pregnancy as a marker of this child- adult shift.

## 5.2 De-constructing Policy / Constructing Pregnancy

What follows is a consideration of the different discourses invoked through decree 39/GM/2003. I will unpack these discourses as a means to trace how in-school pregnancy is constructed, to highlight the discursive imperative for its management and to expose the techniques of its regulation. I will do this by analysing specific excerpts of the policy text<sup>33</sup> which construct in-school pregnancy as *invisible* by conflating 'unwanted' with 'unplanned' (Section 5.2.1), as *criminal* by treating it as an offence which requires punishment (Section 5.2.2) and as *medicalised*, by using words such as *contagion* and *prevention* (Section 5.2.3). I will discuss the discursive nature of these themes by interweaving policy text and respondents' perceptions, ultimately challenging the dominant construction of in-school pregnancy.

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<sup>33</sup> The full text of the policy is offered in Appendix 1.

### 5.2.1 Invisible Pregnancies

*The high rate of school dropout is due to schoolgirls presenting themselves pregnant during the school year. (Decree 39/GM/2003)*

This excerpt from the policy text refers to the concept of drop-out in connection with in-school pregnancy. It states a cause and effect relationship between pregnancy and dropout that implies a dichotomy between pregnancy and schooling. Moreover, pregnancy is constructed as an event that happens to girls, or which they encounter passively. The wording ‘schoolgirls presenting themselves pregnant’ is not commonly used in English, but it conveys a passivity around girls with respect to their pregnancy. In other words, pregnant schoolgirls are disconnected from their agency in a fashion that resonates with Western conceptualisation of teenage pregnancy as unwanted and unplanned (discussed in Section 3.2.1). This interpretation developed during the translation of the policy text, which involved two Mozambican education officers and myself.

In Section 3.2 I discussed the concept of adolescence in relation to those of childhood and adulthood, arguing that these all contribute to categorising individual identity along a life course dimension, ultimately essentialising age phases. The developmental nature of the concept of adolescence makes sense within a modern framework in which the subject is *en route* to becoming an accomplished adult individual. This conceptualisation of the subject is strongly rooted in Enlightenment thought, where the *normal development* of the individual refers to education and employment rather than family formation, and to the use of reason against emotion in the management of one’s options (Section 3.2).

I have contested this perspective as it does not offer a means to understand how people make sense of themselves and go about transitions in their lives. By constructing pregnant schoolgirls as passive, the policy (re)produces the binary between passive/active alongside a deficit view of the pregnant schoolgirl. I interpret this in connection with the sets of binary oppositions used to frame the modern subject (Section 3.3.1), and suggest that the policy constructs a notion of schooling that assumes the child. Moreover, the regulations produced in order to manage in-school pregnancy are tightly interwoven with institutional regimes structured around an intersection of gender and age. In other words, the exclusion of pregnancy from the



childhood/education couplet normalises a linear and uniform identity throughout the text of the policy. Pregnancy is thus constructed as an event that creates hindrances to the ‘normal’ development of the individual. Pregnancy as a marker of adulthood works against the notion of schoolgirl and the necessary infantilisation of pupils within school structures and practices. This oppressive institutional context, which has also been reported in Ghana by Dunne & Ananga (2013), presupposes individual identities as linear and coherent and does not encourage inclusion of students who deal with multiple identities and belongings, as Alzira:

*When I go to school, I take Ines to my parents-in-law, and they look after her while I am at school.*

Alzira wears many hats during her day. She lives at home with her parents, but is in a relationship with the father of Ines, her daughter. She looks after her child together with her family, but also includes and relies upon her in-laws by bringing her daughter to theirs every day before going to school. The multiplicity of her identities put Alzira at odds with the institutional regime of the school and forced her to enact strategies to oppose being *normalised* into night courses. As I will discuss further in Chapter 7, young people participating in this study mostly define their identities as a patchwork of multiple belongings. This renders the association between schools and childhood particularly problematic.

Given the exclusion of the possibility of pregnancy from the normalised identity constructed within institutional regimes, in-school pregnancies are constructed as *unwanted* and *unplanned*. I will engage with this aspect by relating it to the words of Lidia, a sixteen year old mother who dropped out of school in connection with her pregnancy.

*Francesca: Let’s talk about your first pregnancy.*

*Lidia: Ah what can I say? It happened.*

Lidia’s boyfriend did not recognise their son and recently moved to another town. She left school and was looking after her child full-time, while contributing to her household, when I met her. The specific wording chosen by Lidia seems to indicate the need to put some distance between herself and her pregnancy, to the point that I got the impression she was *disconnected* from her pregnancy. Responses such as these have been the norm during fieldwork, as respondents seemed to connect their pregnancies to

god's will or to leave them unaccounted for as Lidia did. On one level, this resonates with the policy text in that it reproduces a discourse of unwanted-ness and lack of planning. At the same time, the disembodied way in which Lidia refers to her pregnancy becomes an active tool through which she protects the narrative of her identity in a time of difficulties. In this sense, representing a pregnancy as unwanted becomes an act of resistance and therefore of agency. Similarly, the lack of planning excludes Lidia's agency not only from the pregnancy, but also from other events which occurred in connection with it, namely, the failing of her relationship and of her schooling. Refraining from positioning herself becomes thus a means to prevent any blame from being cast upon her.

Both concepts of 'unwanted' and 'unplanned' underpin a modern and rational consideration of pregnancy. Such a view still informs policies targeting teenage pregnancy, which is generally considered unplanned (Coleman & Cater, 2006). However, there is little research evidence supporting this claim (Duncan, 2007, 308) as studies have instead developed in two main directions. On one hand, demographic and quantitative studies have focused on the concept of planning and intentionality in relation to pregnancy (Barrett & Wellings, 2002; Klerman, 2000; Santelli *et al.*, 2003). These studies have suggested feelings of ambivalence towards pregnancy may be common, and attitudes towards motherhood may shift with time, before, during and after the pregnancy itself. As a consequence, the concept of intentionality should be considered less rigidly and more transiently. This suggests that individuals rarely make choices regarding their sexual and reproductive behaviour in response to strictly rational and stable assumptions.

On the other hand, qualitative studies have focused on the experiences of young parents, giving them voice in order to challenge the 'rationality mistake' (Duncan, 2007, 325), which assumes that young parents act irrationally. Accordingly, scholarly research has indicated that teenage pregnancies can be as planned as later pregnancies. Cater and Coleman (2006) for instance suggest not only that teenage pregnancies are often rationally planned, but that they are instrumental in accomplishing positive changes in the mother's life. Pregnancies become a means to develop a new identity, feel useful to others and enhance one's self-esteem. Pregnancies can be *wanted* and *planned*, as Zara suggests:

*Maybe a girl wants to get pregnant, have babies, raise her own family.  
 Maybe her own parents do not have anything against this and support her.  
 So what is bad about this?*

Allowing conceptual space for this would render the policy more relevant to girls' experiences. It would also entail a reconceptualisation of institutional regimes directed towards a more open understanding of how to achieve inclusion. A more extensive discussion of individual agency in connection with pregnancy will be carried out in Chapter 7.

Another aspect of this discussion has to do with a discourse of age-appropriateness, which suggests there may be more regulatory framework at play. For instance, as school entry is often delayed and grade repetition is frequent, girls may be married or engaged by the time they attend secondary school. This marital status goes hand in hand with a whole set of social expectations, pregnancy being one of the main ones, as Ms Emilia, a DECM official, points out:

*Girls are already loboladas [married off] in their own communities. As a consequence they are considered adults and getting pregnant is normal if that is the case. So both their communities and their families encourage them to get pregnant.*

Emilia suggests a clash may exist between schools and families in relation to pregnancy. Albeit figuring as marker of adulthood within both contexts, pregnancies may be encouraged within communities, while existing discourses within schools are directed to delaying them. In this sense, Decree 39/GM/2003 offers no possibility for dealing with the idea of either wanted or planned pregnancies, rendering them *invisible* and thus causing a gap which affects both policy reception and implementations.

Research participants generally struggled to grasp this lack of understanding and felt the policy left them voiceless. In-school pregnancies create a space for the regulation of subjects, which works concurrently along the moral/legal dimension of crime and punishment, and the medicalised discourse of contagion/prevention, which will be discussed in the next section.

### 5.2.2 Criminalising Pregnancies

*As a consequence, there is the need to adopt means of prevention and reprehension of such events, as specified by the following actions, to be taken with immediate effect. (Decree 39/GM/2003)*

The key point of this excerpt is the need to regulate. The modalities through which this need is accomplished can be illuminated through Foucault's concept of power, which works to both punish culprits and as a deterrent for future crimes (Foucault, 1977). As Foucault (*ibid.*) reminds us, there is an aspect of visibility of the punishment, which is directed to deter other similar crimes from happening in the future. As such, prevention is implicit in punishment, it indicates that the two concepts are merged within the policy extract, despite being conceptually different. Prevention invokes the field of medicine and is employed here as a means to avoid contagion. It will be discussed in Section 5.2.3.

The word 'reprehension', meaning a moral condemnation of an event, implies both distaste and the need to address or prevent the event from occurring. In this case, in-school pregnancy is the distasteful event that is the focus of censure which in common sense interpretation is difficult to separate from associated punishment. The issue of punishment is problematic because if there is a fine, there should be an offence. This raises more questions. What is the crime? Is pregnancy a crime? Is it to have had sexual intercourse without being married or being of age? If pregnancy is the crime, who is the perpetrator and who is the victim? Who is the decree trying to punish? These are the questions raised by Arthur & Cabral (2004) with respect to the measure of transferring pregnant school girls to night courses, questions that do not aim at obtaining an answer but at unpacking the complexities behind Decree 39/GM/2003, and challenging the different discourses raised.

Within schools, age-appropriateness of pregnancy plays a part in defining the crime. As pregnancy and (hetero) sexual practices signify adulthood, their incidence during earlier phases of life and during schooling confronts normative associations of activities specific to adulthood/childhood. In-school pregnancy, in this sense, blurs accepted boundaries, and definitions of childhood and adulthood.

The decree recognises that in-school pregnancies

*[...] are often the outcome of the illicit development of an unprofessional relationship between male teachers and schoolgirls. (Decree 39/GM/2003)*

By identifying the relationship behind pregnancies, the policy implies a power differential, whereby male teachers are more powerful by means of both their gender and seniority. Yet, men are rarely penalised, and the indications contained in decree 39/GM/2003 in this respect rarely make it beyond the official act. This is mainly due to two reasons. First, men or boys involved with girls' pregnancies rarely attend the same school as the girls, although they are often members of the local community. Second, if they work in the pregnant girl's school as teachers, it is unlikely that they will be made redundant. The supply for teachers in a Mozambique is in fact limited, and demand for schooling is high. In the worst case scenario, teachers may be transferred to a different school, but even this is quite a remote possibility. This explains why the Decree impacts only those that get schoolgirls pregnant 'in their same school' (Decree 39/GM/2003), but does not prevent them from being employed in another school.

Schoolgirls, on the other end, are already in deficit, laying the grounds of their production as 'victims' and without agency. At the same time, girls carry the visible sign of the crime – the pregnancy itself – and are the ones who receive the main punishment. In this sense it seems contradictory to punish the victim. Some adult interviewees were aware of the contradictions of transferring pregnant girls to night courses, recognising that life would become more difficult for girls who are already dealing with a pregnancy. Yet, the need to punish – and to punish girls themselves - remained quite a strong drive for them, Mr Paulo (MINED) asserts:

*We need to strengthen the mechanisms for punishment. If there is no punishment for girls, they will keep getting pregnant in schools.*

With his words, Mr Paulo invokes a second aspect of the need to punish, which acts as a means to deter other girls from getting pregnant. Ms Antonia, headteacher at the Central School, furthers:

*We do not want to have more girls getting pregnant in the same class because we were not strict enough to move one to night courses. So to some extent, we transfer one, but by so doing, we protect the interests of a number of others.*

If pregnancy renders visible the crime of engaging in non-appropriate behaviours for one's age, and of challenging the institutional regime, the visibility of punishment needs to rebalance the situation and act as a deterrent. Punishment becomes then a way to protect institutional regimes and ensure adherence to its norms.

Punishment cannot lead to redemption for the offender, as a pregnancy that gets to the point of triggering punishment is probably a pregnancy that cannot be undone<sup>34</sup>. It means therefore that there is no going back to being childless, which renders the idea of a punishment entirely useless from the perspective of a tentative rehabilitation. Punishment becomes instead a form of gender and bodily regulation directed to the control of the female body. It is for this reason that it becomes important to address not only which crime is being punished, and whose, but also for whose benefit is a punishment is being put into place.

The discourse of punishment points directly towards the opposition education/pregnancy. For instance Ms Antonia, quoted above, in her interviews talks of her own experience of being a student:

*I did not have any kids myself, and I am glad, because I had the time and the space to invest in my education, and to get where I am now. It is a struggle, it is always a struggle.*

In her interview, Ms Antonia discussed how hard it had been to get to where she was, how she had no time for socialising when she was in education and how she felt she had no options to have children. In her experience, women are not allowed to have both; they can either invest in family life or in their career. For her, having a child while you are still in education is a clear indication that you will not invest in your career, and so why should schools keep your place and not give it to somebody that may be more interested in investing in her (modern) aspirations?

This suggests that education and equality are viewed as a privilege, which pregnancy undermines and threatens. Similarly, Decree 39/GM/2003 is an instrument for the reproduction of a modern social order, in which training and education are important means for personal development. However, those allowed to reap the benefits of the

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<sup>34</sup> Pregnancies may also be interrupted and would not, in this case, lead to a transfer. Abortion is discussed more thoroughly in Section 2.5.

education system in these developmental terms must comply with a set of rules that includes the postponement of pregnancy.

The analysis in this section has indicated how Decree 39/GM/2003 draws on several discourses that position the education/pregnancy nexus as oppositional, problematic and in need of regulation. In the next section, I will address the relevance of a medicalised discourse.

### 5.2.3 Medicalised Pregnancies

Discourses of crime and punishment in Decree 39/GM/2003 discussed in the previous section also bring with them notions of contagion and emulation in depicting in-school pregnancy. By reinforcing each other, these discourses construct in-school pregnancy as a looming event that disrupts girls' educational careers and transitions into adulthood.

Mr Cassimo, from the District School, suggests:

*By implementing that measure, we aim at weakening the occurrence of pregnancy in school. See, if they were to get pregnant and receive no punishment, the other girls in the class would want to do the same too, to get pregnant I mean.*

Pregnancy is seen as a disease that easily spreads within the classroom and needs to be contained. Transferring pregnant girls to night courses becomes a way to protect other girls from the threat of an impending contagion. It is similar to medical isolation required in highly infectious diseases. Such an interpretation of in-school pregnancy finds its reiteration in the phrasing of the decree itself and in the words of many of my adult research participants. For instance Ms Alberta, a technical advisor to Pathfinder (international NGO) states:

*There is also the widespread idea that in-school pregnancy is like a disease: if you have a pregnant girl in the classroom, this will act as an incentive for other girls to get pregnant too.*

The relevance of this interpretation of pregnancy can be grasped in connection with two different discourses. The first considers in-school pregnancy as an infection, borrowing terminology from the medicalisation of pregnancy (Section 3.1.1). The second shifts the focus from a condition to the pregnant girl, invoking psycho-developmental discourses of adolescence. Both perspectives tend to essentialise in-school pregnancy, viewing it as

physiologically hazardous because of either physical immaturity or psychological weaknesses. These explanations work to frame teenage pregnancies as generally undesirable and objectify in-school pregnancy as a pathology requiring treatment.

This medicalisation of the field of sex and sexuality echoes that which surrounds the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Talks of symptoms, risks, and prevention abound as a consequence. The following quote, from Dr Anais, MINED official, is quite insightful in that regard:

*Also, you should not forget that pregnancy has some symptoms, and these should not be shared with others, as they would make the rest of the class waste a lot of time. Consider if she needs to go to the toilet a lot, if she feels sick, and the rest of the class naturally would like to assist her. This translates into a lot of time wasted for the normal school day. And in psychological turmoil for everybody.*

Dr Anais claims that pregnancy has symptoms which may impinge on the process of learning. These should be kept out of the classroom in order to allow those who do not present them to carry on with their activity. Pregnancy, in Dr Anais' words, is no different to any other disease. The bottom line is that if you are ill you stay at home and do not attend school. Mr Sampson, a teacher at the Neighbourhood School in Maputo, raises the same concern:

*It is difficult to deal with pregnant girls in the classroom. These are problematic pregnancies, because their bodies are too young, and they suffer more. So it happens that girls faint in the classroom, they feel sick and need to leave the room... it ends up in prolonged absenteeism for them, and it is disruptive for the other kids.*

The medicalisation of pregnancy translates into practical classroom problems, thereby depicting pregnancy as a disability that challenges the role of the teacher in the class. Another aspect of the medicalisation of pregnancy can be drawn from the unpreparedness of the body to carry a pregnancy to term. This is often seen to result in increased medical conditions rendering pregnancies difficult and dangerous. Although international reports are rife with descriptions of medical complications connected with the young age of the mothers (WHO, 2004, 2006), Section 3.1.1 has argued that it



remains unclear whether the risks associated with teenage pregnancy are directly related to the age of the mother, or to other factors.

The discourse of medicalisation is also appreciated by Father JL, headteacher of the Religious District School:

*I am aware that the Ministry of Education endorses this measure of transferring pregnant girls to night classes, but I do not agree. It seems to me that they are afraid a pregnant girl will make the others turn pregnant too, as if it were a disease. Now, pregnancy is not contagious.*

Of course pregnancy is not contagious in a biomedical sense, but using a medical terminology serves well the purpose of explaining its sustained rates, suggests Mr Mario, teacher at the Neighbourhood School:

*Last, but not least, I think Decree 39/GM/2003 expresses the need to contain the phenomenon of in-school pregnancies. By removing pregnant girls from their classes, by punishing the culprits, so to speak, you prevent pregnancies from spreading out. Because, believe me, if you do nothing, they will.*

If in-school pregnancy is not contagious in a biomedical sense, how does it spread out? Mr Fernando, teacher at the Neighbourhood School, Maputo, suggests:

*[Transferring pregnant girls to night courses] is also a way to inhibit imitation. They are adolescents you know, if one gets pregnant the others may think 'well, if she is pregnant, why can't I?'*

In-school pregnancy is thus framed in psychoanalytical terms as a behaviour that young people will want to imitate, invoking discourses of adolescence. Mr Cassimo, History teacher at the District School, adds:

*If one gets pregnant, the others will want to experiment too. Behavioural attitudes play a huge role in this phase, teenage I mean. The pregnant girl is the one who did something new, something innovative. Hence the emulative attitude of the others, who are going through that phase in which they want to experiment everything.*

Older people tended to see teenagers as weak-willed and prone to peer pressure. However, they were not the only ones, as some young people shared the same view, such as Gloria, taking part in a mixed gender focus group in Maputo:

*Pregnant girls do not influence others by telling them to get pregnant. Just the fact that they are there, that they do the same things that they did before getting pregnant, the fact that there seem to be no consequences... that is an influence in itself. And non-pregnant girls are easy to be influenced this way.*

In other words, the visibility of pregnancy becomes contagious when not counterbalanced by the visibility of punishment. Tandi, a girl taking part in a mixed gender focus group in Maputo, feels quite strongly about this:

*[About the decree] it is fair, I think. I believe these situations can influence each other. Imagine that after school I go home and tell my parents that I study with a girl who just pregnant. They are going to be scared that the same is going to happen to me. Why? Because they know that I can be influenced.*

Tandi introduces a new perspective, that of parents. This quote can be read within the dichotomous opposition of childhood/adulthood, and the position of older family members in regulating the transition between one and the other. This transition, traditionally represented by rites of passage, also establishes a continuity between generations, which reasserts a specific social structure based on seniority. Older generations traditionally controlled the transition to adulthood especially through marriage and it is likely that older women have experienced this. In-school pregnancies, however, may represent a form of individual agency that is dislocated from families' control. This subversion or escape from family control may trigger a panic over proximity with pregnant schoolgirls - a kind of 'moral' panic. As such, in-school pregnancy, and pregnant schoolgirls, 'emerge to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests' (Cohen, 1973, 9). I will discuss this further in Chapter 6.

Interestingly, I found discussions on in-school pregnancy to remain rather silent about obvious connections with sex. Nevertheless, the sexual activity that produces pregnancy is part of the sub-text of the moral panic. Mr Nando, teacher at the District School, claims:

*A pregnant girl cannot talk of pregnancy with her schoolmates, who are still young. This kind of talk could awake other desires and as a consequence the other girls may feel encouraged to get pregnant as well. We need to avoid that; this is why I think it is correct to send girls to night courses.*

A pregnant schoolgirl in education represents a double challenge in which she is defined as an adult through both sexual activity and pregnancy. At the same time her student status within a modern educational institution still categorises her as a child. By crossing these boundaries pregnant schoolgirls threaten these distinctions, thereby potentially exposing ‘other school children’ to ‘forbidden talks’ of sex, which in turn may trigger certain unwelcome feelings, desires and behaviours.

In this section I have engaged in depth with the way in-school pregnancy is constructed by the text of the Decree 39/GM/2003. By weaving in the voices of my respondents, I have emphasised the discursive constructions contributing to a deficit view of pregnant schoolgirls. This has invoked the dichotomy childhood/adulthood as inherent to the institutional regime reproduced by schools, which infantilises pupils regardless of their backgrounds and multiple belongings. Through the perspectives of my respondents, I have also invoked legal/moral discourses of crimes, medicalised understandings of prevention and contagion and the psycho-developmental concept of adolescence. These – I have argued – all concur in establishing a difference between pregnant and non-pregnant girls.

The next section will further the analysis by considering how these discourses interweave with disciplinary practices within schools and how the implementation of Decree 39/GM/2003 figures as a space for conflicting discourses and tensions around the conceptions of the subject.

### 5.3 Defining Disciplinary Practices

Schools organise activities within certain times and spaces, which discipline individuals into specific patterns of behaviour. This is aimed at producing docile bodies or subjects that comply with the existing social structure. In this sense, schools are by no means different from other institutions such as prisons, or hospitals, which have received a more thorough consideration in Foucault’s studies (Foucault, 1977). Nonetheless, the relevance of Foucault for the field of education is important. His understanding seems

particularly fitting in regards to the heavily regulated issue of in-school pregnancy in Mozambique. In this section I will embark on a consideration of the educational procedures put in place to regulate in-school pregnancy. By unpacking them, I aim to clarify the techniques of regulation and their discursive framing.

In-school pregnancy is strictly monitored through a system that collects information at the ground level by both staff and pupils, compiling it on a termly basis and forwarding it to the relevant Education Directorate, which will then submit it to MINED. MINED compiles a report, which is then used both to assess the occurrence of in-school pregnancy throughout the country and the success of the current policy. During my fieldwork I explored the methods of data collection and through this process the disciplinary techniques became visible.

The following sections will consider some of the mechanisms deployed in the surveillance and control of pregnancy within schools. I will consider the position of PE teachers, of in-school pregnancy committees, and of prefects in extending the regulatory machine. Within each sub-section, I will raise the contradictions each position entails, and the resultant sites of resistance.

### 5.3.1 PE Teachers

The logistics of school attendance generally imply a rather sedentary and passive bodily behaviour of both males and females: in class they often sit still and are actively discouraged from moving around. The surveillance and control in these cases is about keeping pupils quiet and in class – docile. PE as a compulsory subject in schools, by contrast offers the teacher opportunities to view and pay attention to physicality. PE teachers are therefore in a particularly good position to detect pregnancies in their cohorts as pregnant girls report not being at ease participating in PE classes. Protracted absenteeism can alert suspicion even before a pregnancy becomes visible. Ms Ana, PE teacher at the Central School, succinctly explains:

*It is us PE teachers who find out earlier than others. That is because pregnant girls try to avoid classes with us. Once they know they are pregnant, they do not want to exercise as they fear it is going to be harmful for them, but also because in getting changed and moving around the likelihood of being discovered increases.*

Avoiding PE is then a strategy pregnant girls use to try and prevent detection and being transferred to night courses. However, being spotted by a PE teacher is just the first step of a complex set of procedures, illustrated here below by Ms Antonia, headteacher of the Central School:

*If PE teachers start to notice girls skipping classes, they approach me, and we make investigations. If the pregnancy is confirmed, we start making some enquiries about the situation of the specific girl, who does she live with? Who is her encarregado de educação [guardian]? We meet together with them, and explain that the girl has now two options. The first is to cancel her matriculation for the time being, so that she can concentrate on the pregnancy and the baby. Then after birth, once her situation is more settled, she can come back to school. The second is instead to directly transfer to night courses and continue her education there. In both cases, we try to make it as clear as possible to both girls and their guardians, that by no means she will be readmitted to day school, even after the birth of the baby.*

So the information that may have been extracted by PE teachers is then referred up to the school director, who then proceeds to make investigations. These usually involve questioning other teachers in order to detect any change in the girl's behaviour in other disciplines as well. Possible signs could include failure to go to the board during classes or to leave the classroom during breaks. These are all modes of individual resistance to transfer to night courses that will be considered more thoroughly in Chapter 7.

If pregnancy rates are high, schools may decide to create special committees, which are then in charge of dealing with and managing the procedures relating to in-school pregnancy.

### 5.3.2 In-School Pregnancy Committees

District School, for example, established an in-school pregnancy committee composed only of female teachers, as the school's management thought this best for approaching girls on such private matters. In this sense, female teachers' identities were conceived in relation to their 'nurturant femininity' (Reay, 2001) and aptitude for pastoral care and counselling, a trend that has also been noted in Botswana's secondary schools (Sara

Humphreys, 2005, 256). It should be noted that girls did not necessarily prefer to approach female teachers, as Lidia indicates:

*Francesca: Why did you talk to Mr Nando and not Ms Liliana?*

*Lidia: I always had a good relationship with him, and I never felt judged. With Ms Liliana, because she is a woman, and she finished her education and now she is a teacher... Maybe she would have looked down at me.*

Because parenthood and education are constructed in opposition, female teachers are sometimes those who did not have children, hence may be more judgemental towards pregnant schoolgirls than male teachers. While female teachers are institutionally positioned as more appropriate for counselling and pastoral care, Lidia indicates that individual identities may be more complex and nuanced than that. This is an excerpt of a conversation I had with Ms Liliana, a teacher at the District School and director of the in-school pregnancy committee:

*I am a member of a commission of teachers, whose role is exactly to find out about pregnancies, and to provide girls with guidance and support. My approach is to try and talk to them [girls who are suspected of being pregnant]. I try to find out what their problems are and in what ways I can be of any help. Especially if I start to notice that their grades are going down, and their motivation as well. [...] When we get to this point the conversation is quite intimate, so they usually confess that they are pregnant.*

In this first part of our conversation, her tone of voice was very calm, quiet, and almost sweet. I could detect a clear concern for girls' wellbeing, which I thought triggered her participation in this committee. However, as our conversation proceeded, I could note that her tone of voice and choice of vocabulary changed as she started to recount what happened after girls *confessed*<sup>35</sup> that they were pregnant. It became harsh, straight to the point and inflexible:

*Francesca: So what do you tell them when they admit they are pregnant?*

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<sup>35</sup> To 'confess' a pregnancy was a recurrent phrase that teachers used. This has legal and religious connotations of pregnancy as a crime/sin and is aligned with negative constructions of in-school pregnancy as a deviance discussed in Section 3.1.1.

*Ms Liliana: I talk straight and very clearly to them. I ask them who the father is. [...] If they are attending 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade, they are to be moved to the night course, as we have that option for those classes.*

*Quem è o autor?* Who is the father? Or more literally, who is the *author*, suggesting that the agency, the will behind a pregnancy, is not to be located within the girl who carries it, but within the male with whom she had a sexual encounter. However, there are minimal consequences for the father, and it is generally girls who bear the brunt of this situation, as stated at the beginning of this chapter. In the interview it became apparent that the role of the committee was effectively to both advise and assist pregnant girls by providing support, and to extend the disciplinary apparatus. The tension between punitive and pastoral roles of in-school pregnancy committees resonates with research carried out in Zimbabwe, where counselling seemed to be a euphemism for punishment (Leach & Machakanja, 2000).

In-school pregnancy committees maintain this sort of duality. On one hand they are created to provide support and guidance. On the other, their formal function is to detect pregnancies and trigger transfer to night courses as indicated by Decree 39/GM/2003. This duality is evident in the words of Mr Estevão, teacher at the District School:

*Now we have this commission who deals with pregnant schoolgirls. They are in charge of talking to girls who are suspected of being pregnant. They are good, because they find ways to make the girls open up to them, and admit that they are pregnant.*

The moment of the confession is key. Once a pregnancy has been acknowledged, the onus is on the pregnant girl to initiate her transfer to night courses. This is an application, as girls are requested to prepare a document in which they request to be transferred. Confessing and applying for transfer can be interpreted as a process of subjectification through which girls produce themselves as subjects no longer deserving recognition within mainstream schooling. Transfer to night courses becomes thus a technique of domination in which pregnant girls are generally made a passive object of the decree. Yet, they are active in complying with institutional prescriptions and in forming their own identity position as they confess and apply for being transferred to night courses.

### 5.3.3 Class Representatives

Another disciplinary practice is the system of prefects:

*Each class has a student representative that should serve as a contact point between pupils and teachers. Among his/her tasks, is to inform teachers if something is going on in the classroom. A pregnancy is obviously included in the list of things he/she is supposed to tell us. So this is another route for us to get the information. (Ms Ana, PE teacher, Central School, Maputo)*

Student representatives carry out the role of prefects, bridging the gap between pupils and the teaching staff. With regards to in-school pregnancy, they become active parts of the mechanism of surveillance. Their role is to minimise the potential opposition between teachers and pupils, although they seem to be (re-)producing existing structures of power. As they are formally students, they contribute to rendering visible the ways in which power actually extends to different levels of society and is diffuse (Foucault, 1977), as opposed to being exercised exclusively by some over others. Humphreys (2005, 194), in her ethnography of secondary schools in Botswana, defines prefects as the eyes of the school, invoking a 'Foucauldian notion of regulatory surveillance that becomes so internalised to become self-regulatory'.

At the same time, it would be simplistic to assume that prefects forget their peers altogether. It is not unusual for a prefect to fail to disclose a pregnancy, as Carlos pointed out in a mixed gender focus group:

*I am a class rep, and yes, I know that I should report girls to the school director if I know or suspect they may be pregnant. I do not do it though. Why? Well first of all because many of the girls in my class already have babies, so what do I do, do I report all of them so they all get transferred? And second, they are my friends you see; I do not necessarily like to put them in difficult situations. As I said, there are so many young mothers that if I were to report them... I would not be too popular if I started to report people would I?*

The position of prefects, like that of in-school pregnancy committees, is characterised by a certain degree of tension. On one hand it extends mechanisms of surveillance among students and carries the potential of referring information from cohorts up to the



school's management. At the same time, it works both ways and prefects may decide to use what they know of the modes of surveillance to make sure their peers are not identified. For instance they may know the modalities through which suspicion of pregnancy is acted upon by teachers, and alert classmates accordingly.

PE teachers, in-school pregnancy committees and prefects are positioned in systems of regulation to sustain the constant surveillance of in-school pregnancy. The next section will engage specifically with the concept of the regulatory gaze as one of the main modes of policing in schools.

#### 5.3.4 The Regulatory Gaze

In this section I conclude discussion on disciplinary practices by considering how institutional regulation works through a constant practice of surveillance. Through this, bodies are exposed to an 'inspecting gaze' (Foucault & Gordon, 1980, 155), and constantly assessed against institutional regimes. The modes of *policing* schools are enacted at the beginning of the school year, when teachers learn to 'keep their eyes open', as Mr Nando (District School) puts it:

*We find out because we try to keep our eyes open for signs of pregnancy. At the beginning of the school year we try to get to know the students as much as we can. This way, we realise pretty early on if there appear any changes in their behaviour or looks.*

Systematic surveillance includes spotting early signs of pregnancy, such as extensive absenteeism from PE, refusal to go to the blackboard or to leave the classroom during breaks. At the same time, the internalisation of this gaze works to increase the regulatory power of surveillance. Herminia, a 25-year-old girl with two children talks about her experience in school:

*When I was 17 and got pregnant things were quite tough. I felt discriminated against by my classmates, I guess. But the relationship with them got so much better afterwards that I think it was not them discriminating me, but just me fearing they would! In fact, already when I gave birth, my girlfriends were in the hospital with me. They stood by me, kept me company, and made me feel included. I can't say they left me out.*

This quote suggests that surveillance extends from teachers to class representatives and peers to the point of being internalised,

*[...] each individual thus exercising this surveillance over and against himself.* (Foucault & Gordon, 1980, 155)

Peer regulation and internalisation of the rules are key elements of the institutional regulation, playing a part in the process of subjectification of girls. In other words, the mechanisms of constant surveillance work through the internalisation of the gaze. Pregnant schoolgirls may fear discrimination. As a consequence, they will pre-empt that possibility by putting some distance between them and their peers, thereby becoming active subjects in their self-exclusion. This may occur for instance through failure to engage in socialising activities at school, such as breaks or pre/post-class gatherings.

At the same time, it is worthwhile noting that there are some limitations to how the regulatory gaze may operate. For instance in 2012 the pupil to teacher ratio (PTR) was 1:58 (Directorate of Planning and Cooperation School Construction and Equipment (DIPLAC) & Ministry of Education (MINED), 2013), making it hard for teachers to remain aware of the conditions of every pupil. Although processes of internalisation of regulatory framework have been pointed out in this study, internalisation also works to render young people aware of the regulations, thereby equipping them with more resources in resisting them. For example, as pupils are generally aware of the policy indications, they know that they are potentially under constant observation, which translates into a constant self-monitoring of their appearances. Similarly, Section 5.3.3 has suggested that prefects may play on the duality of their role by both reproducing the institutional gaze within cohorts, and alerting other pupils of the risks they run.

## 5.4 Dropout or Throw-Out?

In this concluding section I draw on the arguments developed so far to expand the notion of dropout by integrating that of throw-out. The title extends points made in Section 5.1.2: if the boundaries between transfer and dropout are blurred, then it is evident that the notion of dropout does not offer sufficient insight into school abandonment. For this reason I will first engage briefly with current literature on dropout and factors connected to night courses which render attendance problematic. I will then argue that these factors, combined with the production of a non-agentic, deficit

subject of the policy and institutional regulatory discourses suggest push factors may play a substantial part in dropouts, calling for an integration in the notion of throw-out.

Dunne & Ananga (2013), in their paper on dropout in Ghana, provide an exhaustive consideration of school abandonment as a process that happens over time, and which entails different factors. As they rightly indicate, institutional definitions tend to offer more static conceptualisations in which a dropout simply refers to someone who leaves the education system without achieving a degree or terminal qualification (OECD, 2002; UNESCO-UIS, 2005). This study contributes to the nuancing of dropout processes by highlighting how institutions indirectly encourage dropout by requiring the normalisation of identities in order for pupils to adhere to institutional regimes. Zara, a young mother who participated in a girls-only focus group in Maputo, suggests:

*A healthy environment would not cast any shame on a pregnant girl. A pregnant girl would not have that urge to leave and hide from her peers. I think that a pregnancy cannot be negative or wrong. What is negative is the discrimination within the school. It is not the pregnancy that discriminates, it is the school.*

This last quote very succinctly elaborates how the policy regulation of in-school pregnancy produces local conditions in which processes of exclusion and discrimination operate through institutional life in schools. The hidden operation of these regulatory techniques in turn focuses on the pregnancy rather than on the very school processes and social relations that produce the social and educational exclusion.

Previous sections of this chapter have indicated the ways in which policy indications effectively push pregnant girls out of the school system. I have illustrated how discursive strains produce the pregnant school girl as transgressing certain boundaries for instance those pertaining to the childhood/adulthood opposition. Educational institutions, on the other hand, work to normalise these behaviours, and do so by developing sets of norms aimed at reproducing an institutional regime and at positioning individual identities accordingly.

Most critically, these discursive framings and processes of regulation work to produce the pregnant school girl as lacking agency both in the process of becoming pregnant and in her educational future. At the same time, they indicate that girls should be held responsible and thus bear the brunt of the punishment, to be administered via transfer to

night courses. Last, by invoking a medicalised discourse of prevention and contagion, the policy further essentialises the categories of childhood and adulthood, objectifying in-school pregnancy as deviance, and pregnant schoolgirls as failed individuals.

In conclusion of these considerations, I find that Luker's notion of 'throw-out' (1996, 9) manages to illuminate the mechanisms through which education institutions fail to operationalise inclusion. Pregnant schoolgirls do not leave school as a direct result of the pregnancy. Instead, school abandonment seems to happen in association with 'the structures that banned pregnant teachers and students from school grounds' (*ibid.*). Acknowledging push factors should not overshadow pull factors (childrearing responsibilities, household duties, and the like), but should instead contribute to a nuanced understanding of the obstacles pregnant girls encounter while they are in formal education.

## 5.5 Summary

In this chapter I have made visible the complexities within the pregnancy/education nexus at a policy and institutional level. In order to do so, I have considered the construction of in-school pregnancy through the current policy text in Mozambique. According to decree 39/GM/2003, in-school pregnancy is an unwanted and unplanned event which hinders school completion. It is contagious both in a biomedical and behavioural sense, in that its presence in the classroom might proliferate if nothing is done. In-school pregnancy is ultimately seen to require some form of punishment, which is imparted through transfer to night courses.

Respondent perspectives suggest that such measures may be regarded as beneficial on more than one level. At the outset, transfer condemns pregnancy and acts as a deterrent for future potential pregnancies; it protects pregnant girls from discriminatory acts supposedly carried out by classmates and it prevents contagion by separating pregnant from non-pregnant girls. Furthermore, it seems to be in line with international agreements in that it contributes to fighting one of the main obstacles to girls' education – namely, pregnancy – as well as representing a move to greater inclusion. Pregnant school girls do have access to some form of education when previously they would have simply suffered expulsion from school.

Data and analysis generated through this study suggest however that transfer to night courses may not be as beneficial as envisaged, acting as a highway towards school abandonment. Going to school at night is more difficult for a number of reasons, namely the scarcity of transport, increased risks connected with being out and about at night, difficulties in finding childcare at night and the reduced quality of night courses, which make the effort of going questionable, to say the least. Decree 39/GM/2003 - and the disciplinary practices connected to it – contribute to reproducing an institutional regime built around the infantilisation of its subjects, and works accordingly towards their normalisation.

In this respect, I support the nuances offered by the notion of ‘throw-out’ (Luker, 1996), which creates a space for identifying push factors connected with a school dropout, such as Decree 39/GM/2003 which contradictorily closes down access for pregnant girls and young mothers. Although the decree apparently improved the predicament of pregnant schoolgirls and young mothers prior to its implementation in 2003, its consequences are likely to bring about little change. Regardless of whether it plays out as dropout or throw-out, pregnancy-related school abandonment transfers the cost of a pregnancy beyond the school grounds, to the young women themselves and often to families and communities. The necessity to consider normative frameworks invoked within those spaces has become apparent in various sections of this chapter, and that is where the analysis will now turn.

## 6. From Schools to Families (and Back to Schools)

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Chapter 5 has unpacked and elaborated the dichotomy of education/pregnancy at policy, institutional and personal levels. Specifically, in-school pregnancy has been explored as the confluence of multiple discursive texts (principally policy, institutional and teacher and student perspectives) that produce physical and discursive spaces, distinctions and regulations. These, in turn, frame the identity resources that construct the pregnant schoolgirl by relying on the mutually exclusive categories of childhood and adulthood, leaving little space for the inclusion of individuals exerting multiple identities and belongings. By considering the practices of regulation, and the ways through which these practices extend the regulatory gaze within school staff and pupils, I have argued that institutional regimes make it hard for pregnant schoolgirls to remain in education, and ultimately encourage them to drop out. A dropout usually entails the transfer of the management of a pregnancy to girls' families.

In this chapter I take up where Chapter 5 left and consider families as key socialising institutions offering another context for the interpretation of in-school pregnancy. If Chapter 5 discussed the construction of in-school pregnancy against the categorisation offered by the childhood/adulthood dichotomy, this Chapter revolves around the opposition between tradition and modernity. I structure the analysis in three sections. In the first one I consider the regulation of pregnancy by following girls as they break their news to their families through to the arrangements put in place to deal with the pregnancy first and with the new-born afterwards. In the second and third sections I challenge the dichotomy tradition/modernity by looking closely at the institutions respondents typically associated with them, respectively, families with tradition and schools with modernity. In doing this, I refrain from imposing a rigid separation of schools and families, and allow the discussion to shift back to schools towards the end of this chapter, as required by the flow of the argument. I conclude by suggesting that the multiplicity of discourses identified here is both constitutive and constituting of the individuals belonging, crossing and ultimately navigating each site.

## 6.1 The Regulation of In-School Pregnancy

Families play an important part in the regulation and management of in-school pregnancies. By looking at how pregnancy is communicated (Section 6.1.1) and the reactions to the pregnancy girls get (Section 6.1.2), I will unpack the discourses constructing in-school pregnancy within this normative space. I will then discuss how regulatory frameworks shift to accommodate different circumstances (Section 6.1.3), before considering the variety of family arrangements put in place after childbirth. I will use this to support the claim that in-school pregnancy is discursively constructed, aiming to deconstruct the couplet families-tradition as invoked by research participants.

### 6.1.1 Communication

Sharing the news of a pregnancy with family members can be particularly daunting for girls and their partners. This section will consider who is approached first and why, and what reactions that person may have. Tracing the journey of the news of pregnancy produces a relational itinerary in the support-seeking process. These itineraries provide, in turn, some insight into how networks operate in Mozambique. By drawing on data generated through interviews and focus groups, I argue that young people invoke traditional discourses in order to render their identities intelligible. By so doing they exert a type of agency that is relational and extending beyond the individual (Kennelly, 2009; Lovell, 2003).

Katya, interviewed in Maputo, recounts:

*I told one of my cousins, she talked to my aunt, who talked to my dad, who finally told my mother.*

Melina, 17 and attending the Central School, says:

*It was my boyfriend who suggested I was pregnant. I missed my period, and when I was two months pregnant it became apparent. He then went to speak to my aunt, to ask for help. We did not know what to do. It was my aunt who spoke to the rest of the family. My mother came and asked me, and I did not deny it. My boyfriend also spoke with his family, and they came to my house to speak with my family and decide what to do.*

In both of the cases reported here, the information flow follows a rather convoluted path. Girls (and boys) ultimately aim to deliver the news to their parents, as parents have decisional power over the management of the pregnancy. However, it is quite rare that the girl herself, or her partner, conveys the news directly. It is more likely that the girl, or the couple, would approach other relatives first, often allowing them to break the news to closer relatives or even their parents. This may happen for a number of reasons, such as fear or anxiety of parental reaction and rejection.

The often complex itinerary of the pregnancy news also resonates with more traditional prescriptions concerning the sexual induction of girls. Groes-Green (2013) associates the transmission of sexual knowledge with traditional menstruation rites which girls underwent at menarche. When this happened, mothers would approach someone in the extended family, an aunt for example, who would educate the girl in separation from her parents. Pregnancy news seem to follow a similar path: although the process is initiated by girls and not their mothers, the information reaches a member of the extended group before family members. This way, the itinerary reinforces the connection between individuals and their community, concurrently contributing to the reproduction of traditional norms.

This line of analysis also resonates with a focus group engaged in an *in promptu* theatre piece. This is an excerpt from my fieldnotes from the District School:

*Boy: 'We have to tell our parents'*

*Girl: 'There is no way I can think of telling my parents!'*

*Boy: 'Of course not, but how about that aunt of yours, the one who lives close to the river?'*

*Participants have chosen to be 15 years old. In their piece, they resolve to leave their decisional power in the hands of their parents, who they approach through the help of an aunt. (Francesca's notes, November 2010)*

Relying on older family members does not only indicate that young people feel anxious at the prospect of breaking the news to their parents. It points to their search for rules and for a reference structure. In Section 2.4.1 I have discussed the dynamics of family formation as recounted by older research participants. Their experiences often indicated that older generations (their own parents or older family members) would be in charge of choosing their partners and arranging for wedding celebrations to take place.



In-school pregnancy often follows a different path in that schoolgirls may get pregnant outside of a recognised relationship, hence in the position of breaking the news of a pregnancy unexpectedly. In other words, in-school pregnancy may precede the recognition and acceptance of the relationship by families instead than occurring as the expected outcome of a recognised relationship. By invoking traditional structures *ex-post* young people attempt at inscribing the pregnancy – and themselves – within the discourse of tradition, thereby rendering themselves intelligible through that discourse.

This reliance on traditional frameworks is far from signalling a lack of agency: it suggests that individuals are well aware of which norms are in place and are able to navigate them to their specific needs. More specifically, as Lovell reminds (2003) it points to the interstices and overlaps between different regulatory frameworks as sites where agency can be teased out of the interaction of different subjects.

Once communicated, the news of a pregnancy is likely to trigger very different sets of reactions.

### 6.1.2 Reactions

For the girls interviewed in this study parental reactions encompassed every degree of the spectrum, from being extremely upset, to being glad and enthusiastic, with the ever-present concern over schooling. Zara's experience, for example, is as follows:

*My parents were really angry at first. My father in particular did not talk to me for a while. However, they accepted me and the baby in their house and helped me financially. They do not have much, but all the food they have is to be shared with my son and myself.*

Ermelinda's experience is similar:

*My father was very upset when he knew that I was pregnant, but he eventually accepted me and the baby to live with them.*

For those who experienced a negative reaction within the family, fathers seem to be the main figures for expressing it. Ms Joãna, a Programme Director for a local foundation, puts it succinctly:

*Traditionally women are not decision makers.*

Men are often considered to hold decision-making power and further they express the voice of the family *in lieu* of the family. In this sense, seniority is tightly interwoven with a specific construction of gender, as not only are the decision-makers older people, but also they are traditionally men. Illuminating in this context is Bakare-Yusuf's (2004) deconstruction of Oyěwùmí's (1997) analysis of West Nigeria. Bakare-Yusuf theorises the workings of power as extending through a complex net of multidimensional interlinkages, whereby seniority may exacerbate gender power differentials. Seniority is key in the representation of a traditional gender regime, and is also the aspect that may be challenged the most through the occurrence of in-school pregnancies.

Reactions to a pregnancy may be negative not necessarily in reaction to the pregnancy itself, but in terms of its implications, for instance in relation to schooling, as Paula, a 44 year old mother, explains:

*I was in distress. She was a very bright student. I expected that she carried on with her studies, that she later found a good job... all that.*

Paula's concern did not have much to do with the pregnancy itself, or with the relationship her daughter had which resulted in a pregnancy. Her preoccupation had to do with schooling, as she felt that path would soon be precluded to her daughter as a consequence of her pregnancy. School and pregnancy are perceived as mutually exclusive, which contributes to the reproduction of the dichotomy between the two. Moreover, Paula's reaction confirms that families do not have only one voice. In this case, they do not only push for girls to embrace the traditional standard of the good Mozambican woman (further elaborated in Section 6.2.1) but they may also encourage them to pursue their educational goals.

The communication of a pregnancy may elicit more neutral reactions, in that family members may consider it normal for their daughters to get pregnant. This is what happened to Cristina:

*After [telling him] we went to talk to his parents. They were very surprised; as of course they were not expecting anything of the sort. However, they had met me before, I was not a total stranger, so it was kind of easy for them to accept me in the end.*

Cristina and her boyfriend had been in a relationship for four years and even if nothing had been decided within their respective families, it was clear that her pregnancy was not entirely out of the blue. Again, the only worry in her case had to do with schooling, as both herself and her family were aware of current policy regulations and knew it would be hard for Cristina to remain in day school. This suggests that families may not proactively reproduce the binary education/pregnancy, but may do so indirectly, through the perceptions they have of schools.

Reactions can also be positive, for instance in the case of Lidia, who was not expecting to be pregnant, and who started to fear the symptomatic reaction her body displayed:

*[My mother] did not say anything about the pregnancy itself, but she was also glad because we finally understood the reasons of my sickness.*

Physical reactions to pregnancy such as nausea, fatigue and so forth can be interpreted as symptoms of a medical condition and cause great concern not only for the individual, but for her immediate contacts, family members, partners or friends. Situations like this can be particularly worrying in a country affected by HIV/AIDS such as Mozambique, where AIDS national prevalence was 11.5% in adults aged 15-49 in 2009, and HIV prevalence was higher in women (13.1%) than in men (9.2%) (Instituto Nacional de Saúde (INS) *et al.*, 2010). Finding out that certain physical symptoms are not caused by a potentially deadly disease, but by a pregnancy, may bring extreme relief.

Lastly, reactions to the pregnancy can be positive in their own right, as Clara, the mother of a young research participant, suggests:

*How it was when I discovered that she was pregnant? I was the one who asked her if she was, to begin with! I felt something was different about her. She said she was. So I bent down and kissed her belly. I wanted to welcome my grandchild. She was crying because her boyfriend did not want to recognise the baby. But I told her not to cry, because I would stand by her. I would support her. She said she felt guilty, but for me there is no guilt in having a baby. For me her baby is already part of our family. The love, the support they both will need, they will find it in me.*

Clara's reaction to her daughter's pregnancy fully embraces a more traditional perspective where fertility is a fundamental social value in defining individual identities, as childless women are considered to be 'incomplete individuals' (Andrade *et*

*al.*, 2001, 32). At the same time, Clara is also superseding the requirements of paternal recognition by supporting a more contingent structure of the family. Clara's husband left her and the family years before, and she successfully managed to raise her four children alone. Her pride is clear as she explains how complete her family is, even without a male head.

Reactions to a pregnancy may clearly combine a variety of different emotions, as welcoming a new addition to the household may be influenced by concerns regarding schooling or the lack of certainties connected to the relationship between the young parents. This variety suggests the presence of different – and sometimes competing – discourses associated with the dichotomy tradition/modernity. The next section will consider the more formal regulations invoked further to the disclosure of a pregnancy.

### 6.1.3 Shifting Regulations

Formalising a union is quite a complex process that involves multiple steps, regardless of whether the woman is pregnant or not (refer to Section 2.4.1). What is interesting to consider here is that those steps do not change in the case of an in-school pregnancy. In other words, the occurrence of a pregnancy can trigger the same mechanisms that would have been put in place before, had the pregnancy occurred within a strictly traditional normative framework.

The first thing worthy of note is the role of families. In line with previous sections, as soon as a pregnancy is made known, families may strive to take over the couple's decisional power by being in charge of negotiations. Consider Cristina's story:

*We have not arranged our apresentação yet, and my uncles are against it. They think we are too young, and that we are not going to stick together so why wasting energies and time to go through a process that will not be needed in the end? They said they will tell us when the time is ripe, and we will do it then.*

In this case, a pregnancy has not triggered the traditional process, although family members have taken responsibility for the relationship by advising the couple not to be formally united just yet. This indicates that, more than the institutions, it is the notions behind them that matter; in this case, that of seniority. Cristina's case thus indicates that

a missed wedding does not necessarily question traditional authority. On the other hand, it can serve the very same purpose of reproducing existing structures of power.

As outlined in Chapter 2, the south of Mozambique is traditionally patrilinear. This means that descent is defined within the kin of the father, and therefore babies belong to them. Ms Laura, a Portuguese teacher at the District School points out that pregnancies elicit a very strong discourse of body ownership:

*Culture here is very traditional. Girls who belong to a traditional family have to take certain steps. The girl's family just sends her along to the dono da gravidez [owner of the pregnancy]. He is the owner you see, so he owns the girl too. Traditionally he would not be in the position to refuse that. But now things are different.*

Ms Laura invokes tradition in explaining what happens after a pregnancy is disclosed. By so doing, she re-enacts it, ultimately creating a representation of what tradition looks like. At the same time, she puts some distance between tradition and current times, claiming that 'things are different' now.

Another insight offered by Ms Laura has to do with the construction of gender within a traditional framework. Men who get girls pregnant are called 'donos da gravidez', literally owners of the pregnancy. This understanding interweaves with that of the Portuguese 'engravidar', which translates as 'getting someone pregnant', and highlights the active role of the man and indirectly takes for granted that women are passive recipients. As a consequence of this, the pregnancy is considered property of the active agent who caused it – men. Clearly a pregnancy, or bump, cannot be taken independently from the woman who carries it, indicating that the woman should also be considered property of the man. This is clearly a reductionist version of a pregnancy, as individuals are taken as bodies. However, it is also informed by the traditionally patrilinear structure of southern Mozambique, which indicates that lineage follows men, and not women.

Some of my interviewees were very familiar with this interpretation, as confirmed by Carla's experience:

*[When they knew I was pregnant] my parents brought me there [where he was living] and said I should be living with him, since I was his wife, in practice, because I was pregnant with his baby.*

Carla did not seem to have any say in the matter. Her pregnancy automatically established that she belonged to her partner's family and her pregnancy was not her own anymore. The same was true for Sofia, although it is worth considering the perspective of her mother-in-law, Vera:

*It was my son who told me [about the pregnancy], so I went and asked Sofia directly. Her parents brought her in my house, and basically dumped her on me. What could I do in that situation? Of course I welcomed her with open arms, such a young girl, and in such a difficult situation. I know this is how things are supposed to go here in Mozambique. If a boy gets a girl pregnant, then her parents bring the girl to him, and it is his family who should take care of everything, look after and provide for her from that moment onwards.*

Sofia is now living with her baby and Vera, her boyfriend's mother. They share the house with Lucia, also Vera's daughter-in-law, and her child. Both of Vera's sons moved to South Africa in search of better-paid employment and send money back to support their mother, their partners and children. Vera's husband does not live with them. In spite of the patriarchal regulations Vera raises in explaining why she is now living with her daughters-in-law, the set-up of her household is very much matrifocal, a dimension that has already been discussed in relation to African kinship and the position of women within communities (Amadiume, 2005; Groes-Green, 2013).

Concepção was also sent to live with her partner once her pregnancy became apparent, although there is an interesting twist in her story:

*My dad threw me out of the house. Since I was pregnant he thought I was not his responsibility anymore, but my boyfriend's. I had to move to my boyfriend's house, and he immediately became my husband. He welcomed me, and that is where I stayed for a few years. Things were soon to change though, he started to treat me badly, hit me, and the like. I could not believe my eyes, but it was my Dad who came and rescued me from there.*

Concepção's father was the community leader of the village she lived in. It was his role to assist with disagreements and issues within his community, and although he did this by relying on his common sense, he also relied on traditional norms. This partly explained his behaviour when his daughter got pregnant. Interestingly enough though,

she did not become completely alien to him, as he then went to bring her back home once he heard she was not being treated as she should have been. The arrangements following pregnancy and childbirth are thus not as strict and straightforward as it would seem by just looking at traditional regulations. In Concepção's case, rules were observed by her family, but not by her in-laws, which led to her family *breaking* such rules in order to protect her.

In Claudia's case, rituals had not been adhered to, to begin with, as people failed to perform the various phases of the Mozambican wedding:

*[After he accepted] My parents brought me over to his parents, where he was living, and that is where I stayed for the following three years. Then my boyfriend died, so I went back to live with my own parents. [Did they just take you back?] Well, yes. It is quite normal that it would happen that way. When my boyfriend died, I did not really have a proper connection with that other family, we had not done the apresentação, nor the lobolo... it would have been strange for me to stay.*

Claudia had been living with her partner and his family for three years and, supposedly, this relationship was as formal as possible given the circumstances. Financial constraints prevented them from organising a formal celebration of their union, but Claudia's partner acted as a connector between her and his own kin. When he passed away, that connection was lost and Claudia and her child moved back to her own family. On one hand, this demonstrates a lot of flexibility in the application of traditional regulations as she and her partner lived together as man and wife although no formal celebration had happened. On the other hand, the same rules remain quite strict, in that failure to perform them seems to invalidate the existence of Claudia's relationship. Ultimately though, these rules can be bent but not cancelled, and individuals actively contribute to pushing at their borders in order to still be able to inscribe their lives within them.

It is through these tensions at the borders that changes come about, as a consideration of family arrangements after the birth of the baby suggests.

#### 6.1.4 Family Arrangements

Families are undoubtedly of paramount importance in the management of a pregnancy. Their key position in defining relations continues after the baby is born, offering a stimulating case for discussing how social changes come about. For instance, and contrary to what traditional prescriptions demand, 18 out of 25 young women interviewed for this study were still living with their original families at the time of the interview. This is not necessarily indicative of the failure of the couple's relationship, as some girls were living with their families – and their babies – even though they were still together with their partners. Yet, it suggests a change. This is what Constancia, mother of a young interviewee, thinks about it:

*The change occurring now does not concern the role of the family, because families still have a very important role. The question is, which family? Before, it was the family of the boy, which would take the girl under its protection, so to speak. Pregnant girls would move in with their in-laws and the couple would be considered married, even if they still had to go through the usual ceremonies of apresentação, lobolo and casamento. Nowadays it is not the family of the boy, but that of the girl! Girls who get pregnant outside of marriage are often not recognised, meaning that their pregnancies are not accepted by the guy, nor by his family. And of course they can do this, because there is no formal tie between the two kids, so why would they get themselves into trouble or get new people to feed when they are probably struggling themselves? But us, girls' families, we really do not have a choice, do we? I mean, don't get me wrong, I love my daughter and my grandson, and I am happy we live together, even if we struggle. But even if I could not afford to keep them under my roof, how could I put my own daughter and her baby out in the street?*

Constancia perceives a strong change in the way pregnancies are managed within Mozambican society. She clearly refers to pregnancies that occur outside of marriage, which would include all of the young women I interviewed during my stay in Mozambique. It is these pregnancies that are contributing the most to enacting change in relation to traditional prescriptions regarding relationship and family formation.



Moreover, they contribute to shifting gender norms in that what is acceptable for young men differs from what is acceptable for young women.

Another shifting norm relates to childrearing. As Section 2.4.2 argued, the Western nuclear family type does not fit with family structures in Mozambique. Childrearing is a shared enterprise, as all members of the network contribute according to their possibilities, as Lucia, an 18-year-old girl attending District School, explains:

*Babies can potentially need care all day and all night. My baby is getting the care he needs. Just he does not get it from me only, but from the whole of my family.*

Lucia's mother is not formally employed but works in the *machamba* [small vegetable plot] meaning she can easily look after her grandson, allowing her daughter to attend her classes during the day. The same goes for Ruth, also attending District School:

*So I just went back to day school, my younger sister and my mother take care of my baby when I am out.*

It is important to note that neither Lucia nor Ruth are threatening the established family structure by imposing a shared childrearing system in their households. They are instead relying on a system that has existed before them, and that has developed as part of the traditional social structure. In this sense, rearing a child coming from an in-school pregnancy is not any different from a rearing child born within wedlock. See for instance the experience of Katya, 24, interviewed in Maputo:

*I think Marla [daughter] is both my daughter and my sister because my whole family helps out with her. Now she is spending more time at her father's, and I think this is important because she needs to know who her father is, and I want her to be able to choose, should she need to, with whom she wants to live.*

Katya got pregnant while she was in school. Although her partner recognised the baby, and they did live together for a while, they never got married. The relationship eventually ended and Katya moved back in with her family and was able to rely on her extended network to raise her daughter. By allowing Marla to spend time with her father, and accepting that she may eventually decide to move in with him, Katya is also contributing to the reproduction of a certain family structure, one that is loose and contingent.

It could be argued that this puts young mothers in a condition of dependency on their networks. It could also be said that a situation such as Katya's subverts roles within the family, whereby the daughter becomes the mother without carrying out mothering duties, which remain instead with the grandmother. Once again, this interpretation does not resonate with local structures. In Mozambique, shared childrearing becomes yet another signal that a different family structure is at play, one that allows for roles to be relatively fluid within a system based predominantly on seniority and gender, more than on roles related to status within the nuclear family.

This section has discussed the multiple complexities behind families' reactions to pregnancies. It has pointed, on the one hand, to the existence of a perceived Mozambican gender regime, and on the other, to the coexistence of various and often contrasting discourses within the site of families, which make it very hard to simply identify families with tradition. This is where the chapter now turns.

## 6.2 *Against Tradition*

This chapter endeavours to convey the multi-layered nuances raised by the 'problem' of in-school pregnancy, ultimately suggesting how the juxtaposition between tradition and modernity may not adequately capture the multiplicity of discourses at play. Yet, the analytical dimensions of tradition and modernity are raised time and again by research participants in order to grapple with the paradox of in-school pregnancy. In this respect, it becomes more effective to suggest that tradition and modernity are constantly recreated through the multiple invocations proffered by individuals in their attempts at making meaning. In this section I look closely at the couplet 'families-tradition' in order to unpack it and expose the multiple nuances of this relation. Ultimately, I suggest here that families are by no means instances of tradition, but rather are undergoing profound processes of change and presenting complicated intricacies of (shifting) regulatory frameworks.

### 6.2.1 The Good Mozambican Woman

What are the standards against which girls are deemed 'good'? In other words, how do the multi-layered and diffracted regulatory frameworks discussed above construct the ideal of the good woman? This has clearly some implications in the way in-school

pregnancy is first constructed, and then regulated and managed. Dr Anais from MINED, warns:

*In this analysis, you cannot leave aside gender considerations that stem from a specific traditional form of the Mozambican society. Women are educated to be 'women'. This means, first and foremost, that their form of learning is essentially a form of learning by doing. This way, women learn to cook, and to take care of the machamba. This form of learning is considered natural. The objective of this natural learning is, clearly, marriage. Girls learn in order to become women who will one day marry. It is not very different, or far away, from traditional conceptions that consider women as a means to production and reproduction. Women become instrument of pleasure for men; they produce food, and reproduce. These are the components of gender submission within Mozambican society.*

Dr Anais describes a good Mozambican woman as one that fully embraces traditional values by accepting her position within a patriarchal system and actively contributing to its reproduction. For instance, transferring pregnant girls to night courses seems to imply that schooling should not be so important for them after all. Yet, and as Chapter 7 will endeavour to maintain, girls are surely not passive in embarking on their route to adulthood. On the contrary, the young women taking part in this research project have often demonstrated high levels of proactivity in striving to achieve something of value for themselves while remaining 'good Mozambican women'.

Vovó Rainha provides a cunningly malleable definition of what a good Mozambican woman should be like:

*A good girl is a girl who respects the other members of her community. She respects her parents and allows them to point her to the right direction. She says hello to people on the streets. Yes, acknowledging and saying hello is a very important form of respect towards others. It signals that she is connected within her community. I must say, it is far from being so nowadays. It is quite rare that a girl would say hello if she meets you on the streets. Things have changed a lot.*

Two aspects of Vovó Rainha's quote are key. One connects girls to their parents, arguing that they should trust their value judgements and ultimately allow them to make

decisions for them. This points to the key position of seniority in defining social structures in Mozambique, as stated earlier. This is also somewhat in opposition to more modern conceptions of the subject as an individual (a socially decontextualized individual) and as a decision-maker (a rational decision maker) developed within the Enlightenment.

Vovó Rainha also passionately recognises the importance of being connected to one's community. Connection, once again, heavily relies on the notion of respect towards older generations. Yet, Vovó Rainha is much more nuanced in her views than Dr Anais above. The former speaks of connection and of respect, whereas the latter sees oppression and patriarchy. In some ways, they are both referring to similar features, as young generations are felt to be gaining more and more autonomy in deciding how to go about their lives.

Connectedness with one's community and respect for the elderly thus figure as key in the construction of a gender regime. Seniority also appears to be strengthened through gender relations, as Mr Paulo (MINED) suggests:

*Another cause [of in-school pregnancies] would be connected to our cultural habits, which indicate that women have to marry early, and with older men.*

Good Mozambican women marry early and they usually do with older men, who have had the time and the occasion to raise enough resources to embark on the long and complex marriage process (see Section 2.4.1).

Seniority is then tightly interwoven with gender in yet another way, as women are expected to state their reproductive capacity early on. This is Carina's comment during a mixed gender focus group:

*Traditionally, a pregnancy is well accepted, within or outside of wedlock, because it states the reproductive capacity of the girl in front of the entire community. After this, she is ready to become a wife and she will not disappoint her husband or new family with issues of infertility.*

Teenage fertility, in other words, is infinitely preferable to the possibility of infertility, an insight that has been highlighted by Jewkes *et al.* (2001, 734) in their study of relationships and teenage pregnancy in South Africa. Other studies emphasise how childlessness can be problematic for individuals, their families and communities, for

example Mariano (2004) in her study of the rural area of Magude, highlights how attempts at overcoming infertility may put women in situation of vulnerability.

This section has discussed how a gender regime has been signified, produced and regulated within a traditional Mozambican social context. The principal structures include: i) Seniority and gender in decision-making; ii) gendered sense of belonging and connectedness with community, and iii) female fertility. Yet, in the modernising and globalising context of Mozambique social dynamics are continually changing. This suggests that there may be different ways for individual behaviour to abide by gender regimes, and that these are generally discursively constructed.

In the next section I will turn to consider how families and individuals position themselves within the broader modernising context and the implications this positioning bears for individual identities.

### 6.2.2 Traditional Families

Vovó Rainha talks eloquently of how relationships used to be in the past:

*Well, us girls, we would not know or meet our husbands before getting married. It was our parents who arranged everything. The two would meet once before getting married, and this would happen under strict surveillance of two older women, traditionally belonging to the family of the boy. The two older women would then meet with both families to discuss how the meeting went. If the marriage was then agreed, these two older women would remain in charge of the practicalities concerning the wedding. It would be them who had to prepare the room for the newlyweds, when the time would come for the marriage to be celebrated.*

*That first night, the newlyweds would have to sleep in a bed with white linen, as a means to prove the reproductive state of the bride<sup>36</sup>. When the two went to bed, the two older women would remain in the room, hidden. They would see and listen to anything that would happen between the couple. Mind you, the couple would not know that they were there. The*

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<sup>36</sup> Actually, that would prove the sexual state of the bride, as being a virgin would by no means prove that she is fertile. I raised this point during the interview, but Vovó Rainha seemed convinced that bleeding after first sexual encounter was a sign of fertility.

*women would rely on curandeirismo [traditional medicine] and feitiçaria [witchcraft] in order not to be seen or heard by the couple.*

*After the couple having had sex, when the couple were already fast asleep, the two women would leave the room without anybody noticing it. When out, they would meet with the other relatives to share information. If such information was good and positive, the house would fill with joy and merriness when the day came. This would be how the celebration of the newlyweds would be remembered.*

*When the couple woke up, they leave the room. The family of the bride would go in the room and take out the white beddings. These would be stained with blood, which proves that she was a virgin and that she is ready to get pregnant and have babies. The family of the groom would promise in front of the family of the bride that he will respect her, help her and educate her always, in any moment, be it good or bad.*

Vovó Rainha changes her register quite sharply during her interview. Before mentioning sex, she was narrating events as if they were from a novel, mixing reality with magic. As she talked of *ter praticado o sexo* [to have had sex] her language becomes immediately formal, plain and dry, as she was suddenly shifting from a world of magic and surrealism, to a medicalised context of sex and sexuality.

This movement between different realms has already been noted by Passador (2009) in relation to the field of health - a site of tension between local, traditional understandings reproduced by healers, and modern, Western approaches developed in relation to HIV/AIDS. However, instead of seeing it as a site of tension between fixed notions of tradition and modernity, I argue here that the emphasis should be on the subject and on the itineraries they construct in navigating different frameworks. These itineraries, I will argue in Chapter 7, directly contribute to the performance of one's identity.

The coexistence of different discourses and values is also evident from the words of Ms Joãna, a Programme Director for a local foundation working with girls in secondary education:

*I think parents tend to be confused between these two dimensions: on one hand they want their daughters to be educated because they feel they can then achieve a better-paid job. On the other hand, they cannot delete the*

*importance of traditional patterns in their life. However, more education is also perceived as increasing number of options a girl may have. This, the possibility of having options, hence to choose, is particularly delicate here. Women are not decision makers, traditionally. As you can see the conflict between schooling, intended as change, and tradition, is quite strong, and individuals get easily caught in-between.*

This quote is particularly insightful in that Joãna insists on the importance of *options* and *choices*. Whilst it is beyond the remit of this study to gauge the extent to which such choices are actually enabled by educational institutions, it is key to note that she perceives this as the crux of the matter in relation to the opposition education/pregnancy. Being able to choose for oneself speaks back to a modern conceptualisation of the individual, whose identity is rooted in their own self more than being diffuse within the community they belong to. Yet, as Section 6.2.1 contends, decision-making is traditionally a masculine prerogative, creating a disconnect between the two perspectives.

In a similar vein, Constancia, the mother of a girl taking part in this study, emphasises the role of choices in grappling with the differences between past and present:

*It was very different before, it was up to your parents to find you a boyfriend and you would follow their advice on when to marry, when to have children and all that. People now behave differently, they have many partners and their choices and outcomes are not regulated by anything or anybody else but themselves.*

Constancia depicts a strong difference between the past, or what her experience of starting a family was like, and the present, or how she interprets younger generations' experiences. Interestingly, the difference she identifies between her generation and younger ones has to do with the array of options young people have at their disposal, and how they go about them by choosing partners without the approval of their families. Yet, even though her perceptions suggest a shift in power and agency over girls' bodies, there are various avenues for detecting some continuity between old and new ways.

For example, returning to Vovó Rainha's quote, it becomes apparent that the actual celebration of a wedding comes *after* an initial sexual encounter between bride and

groom. It is subsequent to a successful<sup>37</sup> night, that the couple are actually declared husband and wife. In this sense, a pregnancy that occurs outside of wedlock does not necessarily break with tradition. Instead, it reinforces a particular aspect of tradition, that of establishing some degrees of reproductive capacity<sup>38</sup> before formalising the union. This aspect has been discussed in Section 6.2.1 as particularly key in the construction of the good Mozambican woman. Consider the following excerpt from Ms Emilia's interview (DECM):

*Another situation happens when girls are already loboladas [married off] in their own communities. As a consequence they are considered adults, and getting pregnant is normal. So their communities, and their families encourage them to get pregnant. This happens because traditionally pregnancy is a necessary step after the lobolo, it is needed to indicate that the girl has reproductive capacity; hence she can be valued as a woman.*

If girls are already committed to a formal relationship, then their families may encourage them to get pregnant as a way to strengthen and formalise their relationship. As such, there is a sense of continuity with traditional institutions revolving around the primacy of seniority. This is evident from Sengulane's words, commenting on the role of traditional norms in encouraging a pregnancy during a girls-only focus group:

*I think culture is very important in the sense that children are considered a blessing. They are the continuation of the family and therefore they are always welcome. Families in this sense may put a lot of pressure on girls, because they want offspring and do not take into account that the times have changed and maybe girls do not want to have babies straight away. Babies are still considered an investment because whatever happens to the elderly, the younger generations will support them and make sure they are doing fine. But what if they do not feel like having kids at that specific point in time? This means pressure.*

Sengulane is hinting at an aspect of body politics that raises the question of who owns the female body. This question has been recently explored in two Southeastern Nigerian groups by Izugbara & Undie (2008). In their paper, the authors argue that ownership of

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<sup>37</sup> Successful refers to the exposition of the couple's bed sheet, stained with the bride's blood.

<sup>38</sup> As Vovò Rainha points out, the bloodstains on the newly-weds bed sheets are proof of the bride's reproductive capacity, and surely the same can be said of a pregnancy.



the body, which is assumed to lie within the individual according to current sexual rights declarations, may be at odds with local cultures. In their findings they suggest that the body may be constructed as a property of the community individuals belong to. Rights that are then conceptualised as pertaining to the individual – such as the right to be in control of one's fertility – may be embedded in the community. This study similarly suggests that different actors have a say when an in-school pregnancy occurs, as if each owned 'a slice' of the girls' bodies, and thus engage in different forms of negotiation in order to exert control over that slice. In this case, older generations have a stronger connection with traditional values, rules and regulations and may be keen to follow through with those as they assist their offspring in their life choices. Younger generations may have different aims and desires, which may encourage them to make different choices and oppose their families, or to stay at home and abide, or choose a different route altogether. This clash of objectives is well expressed by Mandi in a mixed gender focus group:

*I think we can all name at least one girl that has received high incentives within her family to get pregnant early on. It happened to a girl in my class. You know how you are supposed to have sex before getting married according to traditional rites? She was forced into this and got pregnant. Only after this 'proof' girls could be married off in the past. Their family would receive a lobolo and that was how it worked. I think it is very sad when it happens nowadays. Girls are forced to become adults very quickly, and it is not for their best.*

According to Mandi, the control older generations exert, or try to exert, is directly connected to the passage from childhood to adulthood. This socially constructed phase traditionally allowed older generations to be in control of young people's identities. Some research participants from schools and institutional settings used this lens to explain why – in their opinion – pregnancies tended to occur mostly in grade 8, the first year of the *Ensino Secundario* (Secondary School). Ms Liliana, a teacher at the District School, claims:

*I think the 8<sup>th</sup> grade is one of those with high numbers of pregnancy. It does happen a lot in other classes as well, though. See, school attendance in Mozambique is compulsory until 7<sup>th</sup> grade, which marks the end of the *Ensino Primario*. After that, people can choose whether to continue with*

*schooling, or go to work. This is why many pregnancies occur between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. They usually get pregnant in-between and new babies are born in the second term of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. That means that they get pregnant when they get back home, not when they are actively engaged with school classes.*

And also Ms Emilia (DECM):

*Age between 15 and 19 is when pregnancy occurs the most. It is a difficult age, because traditionally those girls should have already been loboladas [married off]. So it is not rare that their own families encourage lobolo and pregnancy as well in order to reinforce women's traditional role, and to have the certainty of being able to arrange a good marriage.*

Although there are no official data confirming this, some of the research participants from school settings were of the opinion that pregnancies occurred mostly between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. That is, girls tended to get pregnant during the break between compulsory and further education. As this happened when they were not engaged with school work, it encouraged school staff to blame families for exerting too much control in encouraging girls to get pregnant or, on the other hand, for a generalised lack of control over young people's behaviour. Ms Antonia, the headteacher at the Central School, claims that:

*Families are often absent. Girls that get pregnant while in school are often orphans. They live with a grandfather, or grandmother, or aunt or uncle. [...] it is families who bear the brunt of such situations. If families are absent, who cares for them? This is also why we have to do our best to discourage those pregnancies from happening. They are no good for anybody.*

Ms Antonia blames families for not looking after young people enough, thereby allowing girls and boys to engage in sexual intercourse before their time, resulting in pregnancies which are constructed as 'unwanted and unplanned' through policy text and mainstream perceptions. However, there is the need to unpack this perceived failure of traditional families in looking after their younger members.

The fragmentation of families may be interpreted, for one, as a consequence of the decimation of the adult population in Mozambique, due to the incidence of HIV/AIDS,

with an overall prevalence of 11.5% (Instituto Nacional de Saúde (INS) *et al.*, 2010). It is also apparent that a number of other processes have had an impact on family fragmentation. For instance migration, both internal and international, has long been part of the social structure of the country, to the extent that migration could be considered as a key feature of the Mozambican social structure (Lubkemann, 2000). This aspect signals that current post-structural understandings of family structures as fluid and contingent (see Section 3.5.2) reflect processes deeply rooted in the history of the country. Mozambican networks are traditionally loose and extended. It would not be rare for parents to send one or more of their children to live with relatives in a different town, in order to make it through a period of scarcity, or perhaps to reap the benefits of higher education not available in their own village, as Alderina, 21, interviewed in Maputo, relates:

*I am originally from Inhambane<sup>39</sup>, my family was quite poor, so they sent me to a relative in Maputo for both studying and working.*

Because networks are loose, it is not necessary for individuals to be related in order to belong to the same network. Accordingly, one does not really have to be somebody's nephew, or niece, or grandchild in order to be sent over, as circumstances are conducive to creating family bonds. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes is quite insightful in this regard:

*Nebira<sup>40</sup> had invited me over to her place for lunch. Carolina<sup>41</sup>, the girl who helped me out with Xangana at the District School, was staying with her. Carolina is in charge of the food, while Nebira helps out, and Lola, Nemebira's daughter of 6, plays at the neighbours. Quintino, Nebira's husband, teaches Maths at a secondary school in the town centre of Maputo, and will not be home until later on in the day. [...] After a while, I start to realize that Carolina does not call Nebira by her name, or Quintino by his. Instead, she calls Nebira mãe [mother] and Quintino pai [father]. (Francesca' notes, October 2010)*

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<sup>39</sup> Inhambane: city in the South of Mozambique, located some 450Km north of the capital Maputo.

<sup>40</sup> Nebira was one of the live-in child-minders looking after girls attending the residential college by the District School where I spent part of my fieldwork. When off work, she would return to her home in the outskirts of Maputo, where she had a husband, and a 6-year-old daughter.

<sup>41</sup> Carolina is one of the girls attending the residential college. For some reason, she was unable to go home for the break, so Nemebira offered to take her home with her.

This hints at a deep-rooted feature of Mozambican social life, discussed in Section 2.4.2: the contingent structure of Mozambican families. This is not only about strengthening the connections one has, but also about creating new ones. Traditional relations of kin have not developed into a Western model of the nuclear family, but into networks whose contours shift with time, interactions and, most of all, contingencies. Father JL, the headteacher at the Religious District School, suggests:

*Familial ties can be very ephemeral, like in the case of partnerships or marriages. Vertical relationships instead, can be very strong. For instance once a baby has been recognized by its father, that tie is going to be there forever, even if it does not correspond to a practical relationship.*

Even if situated within wider and more fluid networks, this suggests powerful paternal relations, which in turn establish a strong continuity between current and traditional institutions. Mozambique is a post-colonial context within which traditional and modern values intersect in multiple aspects, creating a variety of – often fragmented and contrasting – representations. This has been made apparent in this section by emphasising the dual perception of families. On the one hand, school staff blame families for exerting too much control over younger generations, thereby encouraging girls to become pregnant while they are still registered in education. At the same time, families are blamed for not looking after their younger members enough, invoking the discourse of the dissolution of the family as an institution.

In this section I have argued that a stable and fixed notion of tradition and of the family is mythical. Traditional social relations are themselves fragile and dynamic. They are constantly performed and contested. There is also a recognition that things must be changed and that the drive towards gender equality has some impact on traditional social process. These phenomena tend to be constructed as inevitable in the dynamic transition from traditional to modern societies. Yet the shifting and irregular discursive framing of the family and of individuals positioning themselves points to a more nuanced process in which different, multiple modernities are being played out concurrently.

Exposing the fluidity and contingency of family structures against the myth of tradition calls for a similar deconstruction of schools, associated with modernity in contributing

to the construction of young people's identities (Castro & Abramovay, 2003; Osório & Cruz e Silva, 2008). This is what I will discuss in the next section.

### 6.3 *Against* Modernity

This section complements the previous one by arguing for a nuanced understanding of educational institutions. Such a conceptualisation needs to move beyond the modern imperative of training towards employment for individual improvement and for achieving development goals as wider factors need to be taken into account. In this section I will challenge this modern conceptualisation by drawing on data which suggest individuals are dissatisfied with the outcomes of schooling, and by raising some doubts over the quality of the education offered. Last, I will discuss what schooling may offer to young people, arguing for a shift away from the modernity-education couplet.

In Section 3.2 I have discussed education and its prime position within the Enlightenment and modernity theories. Succinctly put, if progress identifies a progression from tradition to modernity, then education – symbolised by the motto *sapere aude* – is characterised as the preferred means to achieve the transition (Bhambra, 2007). The developmental promise of education was fully embraced by theories of development, as the prominent position of educational goals appear in international agreements such as the Millenniums Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) goals.

It is no surprise then that families may invest hugely in sending a child to school. Benefits associated with investing in education abound, both in the short and long run. However, research participants often indicated employment as a means to gauge the success of educational investments. For instance Vovó Rainha suggests:

*It is also that the job market after school is limited. You study to become, let's say, an engineer, and then find out that it is really hard to find a job as an engineer. So you have to resort to something else. In the meantime, you probably wonder why you wasted all those years to study, forgoing possible earnings, when the job you prepared yourself for is just not available. I guess there is a lot of frustration in those cases.*

Vovó Rainha suggests that the question over whether education is a good investment is tightly connected to the realisation of future returns, such as employment and the ability to financially contribute to the household management. However, the clash between expectations and realisations may cause a lot of frustration, and contribute to a generalised lack of trust in educational institutions. The District School is in a particularly difficult position, being in a semi-rural area with an underdeveloped job market. At the same time, its proximity to South Africa acts as an incentive for people (especially young males) to move there in search of better employment. It is estimated that between 30-40% of the men of the district work and live in South Africa (Mariano, 2004, 263). Because jobs Mozambicans would go for do not require training, the competition between schooling and working in South Africa is particularly tense.

For instance, Mr Anselmo, English teacher at the District School, expresses concern over the visibility and value of educational success in the community:

*Parents are generally uneducated, especially here. They do not value education very much. See, even those parents that do well, that do not live in extreme poverty, they have not achieved that through schooling. They have achieved that through employment, here but mostly in South Africa. Their personal experiences do not teach them to invest in school, but elsewhere. For this reason it happens that some families insist on girls going back home when they are found to be pregnant. I do not want to say that nobody values schooling and education. Yet, they are not many.*

If the value of education is dependent on its connections to tangible forms of success, then a failure of the education-employment couplet may lead to a generalised apathy towards schools. Moreover, a failure to comply with its (modern) nature indicates that schools cannot entirely represent modernity.

This disconnect between education and employment is tightly linked to the opposition between families and schools. Employment should be taken as a measure for survival, but also as a dimension of personal identity, as Vovó Rainha argues:

*I think education has both a positive and a negative side. The positive side is that training gives individuals so many possibilities that we did not have at our time. When I was little, we all knew more or less what we would end up doing. We would work in the machamba, and we would know that that was*

*something we would keep doing for the rest of our lives. The negative side, however, is that kids go to school without knowing what it is that they want to do in life. All those choices are confusing. When I was a kid, we would simply know from the beginning, that's all. Now it seems that they go to school, but they do not think, what is it that I want to do? They have so many possibilities that we did not have, but they are not duly explored, nor exploited.*

Once again, choices and possibilities are invoked in explaining the difference between past and present. Vovò Rainha hints at current times as times of increased possibilities for the individual. These are enabled by education, but also by exposure to media and channels of globalisation, as well as by increased mobility and contact with different realities. However, having many options may be confusing, and young people may be required to make more choices now than in the past. Vovò Rainha also hints to agency by suggesting that having options may have little impact if young people do not operationalise them by *choosing* what to go for.

This conception of the self is very much informed by a modern sense of the subject, one that is able to effectively make (rational) choices in order to reap the benefits offered by their context. Yet, young people tend to be labelled 'lazy', 'short-sighted' or 'naïve' if they appear to forgo the opportunities intrinsic to schooling, as Mr Bemvindo, a Portuguese teacher at the Central School, suggests:

*See, they have no will to study. They come late; maybe they will also leave early... They do not care. [...] You should have a look at some of their essays. You would think that pupils who have been at school for a few years would be able to put a couple of sentences together, wouldn't you? You would be surprised. Some of them come to school for many years, and yet, when they leave they are just about able to read and write. Sometimes not even that.*

Teachers would complain to me about the limitations and frustrations of their daily work. They would blame students for not being willing enough, for not being interested in learning, for not being able to grasp how much was at stake when they went to school. At the same time, deconstructing this lack of interest is key to grasping the complexities of schooling in Mozambique. Because a normal school day usually lasts

about 4 hours, it is interesting to consider what occupies pupils for the rest of their time. Transport time to school was about two hours a day for my research participants, as most of them would live quite far from their schools. Other activities may include various tasks within the household, including fetching water, attending to vegetable pots, looking after younger siblings or family members or helping out relatives in their jobs, especially if these are in the informal sector. These considerations are of pivotal importance, as what goes on outside of the school may have a strong impact on what pupils are able to achieve while they are in the classroom. This suggests that the plurality of normative frameworks needs to be adequately considered to effectively assess how and why pupils perform at school. This interweaving can only be facilitated by a smoother connection between families and schools, which is yet to be achieved.

Similarly, aspects inherent to schooling may prove detrimental to achieving quality education. For instance schools may not provide enough material for all children to reap the benefits of those four hours they spend in their classrooms. There may not be enough chairs or desks, or even the distribution of books, notebooks and pencils may vary, often being scant at best. Sanitary facilities may be in a poor state and, for schools with a night shift; lighting and electricity may also raise issues. Moreover, classes are often very big, with a pupil/teacher ratio (PTR) of 1:58 in 2012 (Directorate of Planning and Cooperation School Construction and Equipment (DIPLAC) & Ministry of Education (MINED), 2013). However, this piece of information is of little importance as it often masks striking differences between schools with a relatively healthy PTR and others with  $PTR > 100$ .

Looking into teachers' lives may also be particularly insightful as many teachers are in fact engaged in a number of different jobs, as none would give them enough financial support (see Section 5.1.2 for a discussion of teachers' daily routines).

Night shifts combine the same limitations of other shifts, with the added cost of teachers' fatigue, as they have been working all day and have little energy left to deal with big classes of students with generally 'little interest in learning'<sup>42</sup>. These limitations cannot be left out of the picture when considering that only 22% of children in Mozambique complete their basic education, barely 8% complete secondary, and just 136 of every 100,000 go on to university (UNESCO, 2012a). Issues of quality are

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<sup>42</sup> The use of quote marks is ironic here as this perceived lack of interest has been deconstructed earlier in this section.



particularly pertinent here as, given the premises of these section, it is surprising that pupils may learn anything at all from going to school. Another consequence is that there may be consistent delays when entering the school system. For instance only 20% of children of secondary-school attendance age (13–17 years) are attending this level of education. Among the remaining 80%, some are not in school and some are attending primary school (UNICEF/INE, 2008, 89).

What schools generally provide is a context for socialisation that goes beyond the household or immediate community. I was struck by the realisation that most pupils have a one-hour commute each way to attend schools, as they were not encouraged to go to their neighbourhood school. Mr Bemvindo points out:

*All neighbourhood areas have secondary schools in Maputo. Life could be very easy for these children if they just attended their local school. I do not know why they make life so difficult for themselves by adding transfer time.*

If pupils are willing to pay the extra cost of transport, it probably suggests that there are gains for them. For instance, as mobility is quite high in Mozambique, young people may start their education close to their home, and then move. Sometimes this would entail a change of school, while other times they may try to stay put, in an attempt to retain meaningful relationships, and not to unnecessarily initiate potentially cumbersome administrative procedures that may negatively impact on their school progression.

Moreover, schools offer students the occasion to leave their households and communities, creating more opportunities for socialising and for meeting people they would not have the chance to meet if they remained put. Fernando, participating in a boys-only focus group, comments:

*Going to the local school? You are crazy. Then my family would know what I am doing in a matter of seconds... everybody knows me there already you know... what does it add?*

Schools thus provide a space, different from that of the household or community, where individuals can carve an identity beyond the control of their families. This tendency can be read in connection to social change, as formal schooling implies a shift of control over the younger generation from parents to the school system. It thereby creates a

‘disconnect’ between generations, subsequently weakening the impact that older generations have on young people (Furstenberg, 1998, 246).

In this section I have challenged the education-modernity couplet by drawing on data suggesting that people do not necessarily connect school with success. Success is however at the core of the connection between education and the modern ideal of progress. I have associated this with perceptions some school teacher had of students as ‘lazy’ and unable to reap the benefits of the education opportunity given to them. By deconstructing this perceived ‘laziness’, and associating it with the institutional shortcomings in quality and effectiveness of the education provided, I call for a reconsideration of the position of schools. In this sense educational institutions cannot fit with an exclusively modern ideal. Looking at the ways in which young people make sacrifices and fight to remain in education suggests that schools may offer something of great value beyond training and the possibility of employment. I suggest that this gain may have to do with the intrinsic value of education, but also with the space schools offer for socialisation beyond the family and immediate community.

## 6.4 Summary

This chapter has followed on from the previous one by looking at what happens to girls as they disclose their pregnancies to their family members. In tracing the itineraries travelled by many pregnant school girls I set off with the announcement of pregnancy, going through the family reactions, the practical consequences of dealing with a child and the arrangements following childbirth, to illustrate the multiple positioning - and multifaceted representations - of families. Indeed, families are sites where multiple and contrasting voices and discourses coexist.

I have used the data and analysis to reflect on concepts of modernity and tradition in two sections, entitled ‘Against Tradition’ and ‘Against Modernity’. Tradition, discursively constructed by research participants in association with families and communities, and modernity, associated with the institution of the school, are invoked in opposition to one another. By unpacking the binary, and by looking at the complexities implied within each couplet (tradition-family and modernity-school) I have rendered a more nuanced representation of the spaces of schools and families. My underlying aim in doing so was to move away from the dichotomisation of the two

realms: albeit relying on different regulatory frameworks, schools and families are invoked by research participants – as well as they evoke – conflicting but also overlapping discourses.

In the next chapter I will move on to consider how individuals navigate through different spaces and different regulatory frameworks, constituting and being constituted by a multiplicity of concurrent discursive formations.

## 7. Young People: Constructing Identities

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In Chapter 5 I discussed Decree 39/GM/2003 and the ways it produces in-school pregnancy as a problem, thus invoking multiple forms of regulation and management. Through the analysis, I have emphasised how the institutional regime draws on the mutually exclusive categories of childhood and adulthood in normalising students' circumstances. Similarly, in Chapter 6 I have considered the regulatory frameworks offered by families as a key site for the production of identity and position. This has prompted me to discuss families *vis-à-vis* schools in an attempt to render justice to their internal complexities. The aim was not only to unpack and expose the workings of dichotomous oppositions, but also to emphasise the interplay of multiple and often contrasting discourses.

If earlier chapters have already suggested that girls and their families navigate their lives with reference to conflicting norms offered by both traditional and modern regimes, this chapter will delve into that notion and look at how subjects actively construct their identities by appropriating different explanatory frameworks. This has been described as processes of constantly *suturing* into broader discursive formations (Hall, 1996) in order to render oneself intelligible. The itineraries individuals produce by referring to different regulatory frameworks are directly implicated in the performances of their identities.

The chapter begins by considering individual resistances to regulatory frameworks. I emphasise tensions between regulatory frameworks by illuminating spaces in which social and institutional regulation intersect with individual agency. In this process regulatory boundaries and social norms are challenged with the potentiality to produce a shift leading perhaps to processes of resignification (Butler, 1990). This chapter then continues to consider how resistances are used reflexively in the performances of individual identities, through both individual actions, and collective forms of resistance. In the last section, 'Itineraries of the Self', I combine the various arguments and finalise a tentative answer to Research Question 3: How do young people – young women – navigate the available discourses in the performance of their identities?

## 7.1 From Regulation to Resistance

This section focuses on how individuals resist regulatory frameworks constructing in-school pregnancy and individual identity discussed in the previous analytical chapters. It starts by considering practices of resistance towards Decree 39/GM/2003 as well as to traditional sets of norms. As I discussed in Section 5.2.3, the conceptualisation of in-school pregnancies within schools heavily draws on a medicalised discourse of prevention and contagion. In relation to this, I highlight individual strategies of resistance to biomedical discourses of contraception in Section 7.1.3.

### 7.1.1 Resisting School Regulation and Exclusion

For reasons discussed in Section 5.1.2, night courses are not particularly appealing to girls, who are proactive in developing strategies allowing them to remain in their day classes. These strategies often entail the concealment of their pregnancy, of their body, and silence over the name of the father of the baby. This section reviews those strategies, and considers how individuals push the boundaries of existing regulatory frameworks while simultaneously working with them.

A first strategy is to conceal a growing belly. Lucia for instance, attending District School, recounts:

*I got pregnant in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. See, my belly did not grow much, so I managed to hide it. Also, my last term coincided with the summer holidays, because I gave birth on the 5<sup>th</sup> January. So I simply did not tell anyone, and I could go back to 10<sup>th</sup> grade in the new year.*

Lucia was lucky in that pregnancy came to full term outside of the school year, allowing her to spend her last months away from school. This was made easier as her school and family were quite disconnected, as is often the case as I suggested in Chapter 6. In other cases silence was a strategy to avoid transfer. Girls opted for keeping their pregnancy secret from as many people as possible including their peer group. Unfortunately the visibility of a pregnancy means that silence may not be enough to grant concealment.

A further step is then to actively work to hide one's body as much as possible from the institutional gaze, as Lucinda did. Lucinda was 17, attended the Neighbourhood School, and was introduced to me by the *Diretor Pedagógico* [Director of Pedagogy]. I

interviewed her at school, in a small secluded room. This is an excerpt from my fieldnotes from that encounter:

*She is shy and talks little, I guess she is afraid I might enforce what Mr Mario has not done so far, that is to transfer her to night courses. It does not matter how much I try to ensure her that I have no such aim, that I am just interested in talking about her experience of being pregnant in school, should she be willing to share. She agrees. She looks tiny, but also 'bulky' somehow. I can't see her belly, and I wonder whether she is pregnant at all. I ask her. She says she is 7 months pregnant. (Francesca's notes, Maputo April 2011)*

Lucinda did not have an enormous belly but she almost disappeared in the various layers of clothing she was wearing, hence why I perceived her as 'bulky'. This strategy is not risk free: in the hot season it becomes harder to cope with the various layers of clothing. Increased sweating, lack of concentration, physical discomfort and fainting are common symptoms associated with in-school pregnancy and teachers lament their occurrence as preventing educational achievement. This was the interpretation of Mr Francisco, teacher at the Neighbourhood School:

*Last, but not least, pregnant women create hindrances. For instance they tend to faint, they do not feel good overall, and often have to leave the room. This means constant interruptions for them, but also for the rest of the class, and we need to protect those students first and foremost, as they did not choose to put something else before their education.*

Mr Francisco expresses concern over pregnancies and conceptualises them biomedically in terms of the symptoms they show and the ways in which these may hinder a 'normal' day at school. By opposing pregnant schoolgirls to those that are not, and referring to these ones as those who *choose* education, Mr Francisco is also invoking rational actor theory, thus drawing on a modern conceptualisation of the individual and producing a deficit view of the pregnant girl. His worry, in other words, is not for the girl herself, but for the rest of the class, which is still deserving of being educated, and might suffer limitations.

Paradoxically, these hindrances raised in association with a pregnancy may act as self-fulfilling prophecies. Pregnant girls know they are labelled by virtue of their status and

so make efforts to hide it. Yet, by so doing, they might increase the chances of discomfort, which in turn reinforces the perception of pregnancies as obstacles to learning. These risks are usually well known by pregnant schoolgirls. Yet, girls like Lucinda are prepared to accept these conditions in order to resist being found out and subsequently transferred.

Another strategy girls use to keep their pregnancy secret is to avoid leaving their chair for any reason, not even during breaks. This was Alzira's behaviour:

*I was very scared that they might find out and send me to night courses. So I stopped leaving the room during breaks, to avoid teachers having a good look at me and wondering what was going on. While in the classroom I would always remain at my desk, and not go to the blackboard for instance.*

Once again, this strategy can be detrimental to girls' learning. Pregnancy may require girls to leave the room more often for physiological reasons (the need to use the toilet more often, for example). Forcing oneself not to do so may result in difficulties in participating in class activities, or in paying attention for prolonged periods, feeding the general belief that pregnant girls are not fit for schooling. Refraining from going to the blackboard when requested may contribute to the same end. As a consequence, girls may be viewed as especially passive in the classroom, thereby reinforcing the gender stereotype of 'good girls' who do not talk back.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand their refusal to stand up may come across as a challenge to the authority of the teacher.

Yet, these strategies tend to be successful in many cases. For instance Celeste reported:

*I know that the majority of girls in my day class already had children at home. But since the director did not know, they were not sent to night courses.*

Once a pregnancy has been discovered, another opportunity for remaining silent arises. Decree 39/GM/2003 indicates how to deal with the man responsible for the pregnancy, implying that his identity should be made available. Section 5.3.3 discussed the ways in which pregnant schoolgirls are encouraged to 'confess' the name of the man they had sexual intercourse with, in an effort to reach him as well. Specifically, if he is in the

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<sup>43</sup> The increased docility of girls' behaviours has been noted by Humphreys (2013) in her study of Botswana.

same school, the policy indicates that he should also be transferred to night courses.<sup>44</sup> However, girls are not necessarily ready to give this piece of information away, as it may be more strategic for them not to make that name public, especially if they want to reap the benefits of the support they may get. This is Mr Francisco's view, interviewed at the Neighbourhood School where he teaches:

*Does it become clear, who the father is? It depends. For instance, on how much girls are being strategic and trying to 'milk the cow'. Sometimes it pays not to make the name of the father public because you may get some informal contribution. If you make it public, things can get out of control, especially if the authorities are involved. Take for instance the case of a girl who got pregnant with one teacher. If the information reaches the director, that teacher will be punished by losing his job. Now, of course this will not put him in the condition of being able to help out the girl, nor to have the will to help out someone that got him into this situation. I am not saying that a girl who keeps the secret will definitely get more, but if that is what she is aiming to get...*

Resisting school regulations becomes thus a way to assert oneself, in efforts to continue with school education. If the above strategies of concealment fail there is a last resort of bribing school staff. Cristina explains:

*Francesca: Why did you move to this school?*

*Cristina: To escape having to go to night courses. Here they<sup>45</sup> told me they had no vacancy for me, so I had to pay to get into the school. Once you pay to get a place it does not matter if you have a baby at home, if you have a number of babies, or if you are pregnant. Money is at the bottom of it: if you have some, you'll be fine, if you don't, you have to do as they tell you.*

This points to the significance of socioeconomic status in how in-school pregnancies might play out. Those that can rely on healthy financial circumstances are also able to bend rules, while others need to abide by them.

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<sup>44</sup> Although Decree 39/GM/2003 establishes means for the punishment of men as well, I have discussed in Chapter 5 how rarely this happened, leaving girls to bear the brunt of their pregnancies.

<sup>45</sup> Cristina referred generically to the school direction, and did not provide more details on who it was that she bribed.



Keeping a pregnancy secret, concealing one's body and failing to name the father of their babies are all strategies girls use to try and remain in their day classes. This point is key as silence and secrecy are traditionally considered as signifying submission and exploitation. As Ryan-Flood & Gill (2010, 2) put it:

*[...] the liberatory potential of research has been unproblematically assumed to be a linear move from silence to voice,*

and especially so from an early feminist perspective, often concerned with issues of 'breaking silence and speaking out' (3). Silence is interpreted as a response to power and reflects the condition of 'being silenced' (in a subordinate position) more than that of choosing silence (Jungkunz, 2008, 7). Similarly, silence seems to be in dichotomous position in relation to agency and empowerment, whereby voice and speaking out are means to empowerment (Parpart, 2010).

The 'linear move from silence to voice' Ryan-Flood & Gill (2010, 2) refer to is reminiscent of the previously discussed notion of progress (from tradition to modernity) implied by modernity theories. In both cases, education acts as a means to achieve the transition. In this sense in-school pregnancy is doubly disadvantageous as it not only prevents the 'development' of girls, but also renders them invisible and silent by confining them within their homes. The modern subject continues to contribute to dominant conceptions of the individual.

The silences, secrecy and invisibility recounted by some of my research participants signal institutional power regimes and regulation, but are also sites of resistance. For most pregnant schoolgirls the use of silence and invisibility were active strategies with the aim of remaining in day school. Jungkunz's work (2012) in political theory has explored silence to describe four types of 'insubordinate silences', or silences that confront the established *status quo*. There are silences that empower, in that they provide a means of access to resources that might be denied to them. Other silences protest, in that they express disagreement towards certain positions. Other silences resist, are meant to be practices of subversion. Other silences again refuse, as they signal the intention to disengage from the issue altogether. What distinguishes the different silences, Jungkunz continues, is the visibility they rely upon. Whereas silences that protest or empower rely on visibility to reach their desired outcomes, silences that resist and refuse go unnoticed in order to be successful.

This classification is extremely powerful in that it helps to deconstruct the binary relation between power and silence. At the same time, it does not adequately provide for the type of silence identified in relation to in-school pregnancy. Secrecy and concealment in relation to a pregnancy require invisibility in order to be successful. This would correspond, in Jungkunz's classification, to a silence that resists. At the same time, succeeding in keeping a pregnancy secret may allow pregnant schoolgirls to remain in education, hence to gain access to a resource – day classes – which would be denied to them if they were to be open about their pregnancy or found out. This type of silence needs to remain invisible in order to both resist current school regulations, and empower those individuals that opt for it. Pregnant schoolgirls and young mothers choose silence, and by so doing, they construct silence as agentic. Silence, in other words, reflects girls' agency in resisting sites of oppression. It becomes a means for transformation, as girls who are successful in enacting it may gain their desired outcome of remaining in their class. In turn, this is doubly empowering. It breeds success because it enables a burgeoning self-confidence in one's abilities while also allowing pregnant girls and young mothers to remain in charge of their own identities.

This analysis of silence points to individual acts of resistance as a means to highlight the tensions between regulatory frameworks, the discourses they produce, and individuals. By resisting dominant regimes, girls navigate the disconnects in the institutional regimes, the interstices in which instances of their agency can be teased out. This is made possible by their own inextricable connection with institutional regimes: pregnant schoolgirls are constructed as 'wrong' by institutional regimes, and as a consequence of this conceptualisation they resort to silence as a means to assert themselves. Their silence indicates that they are still subject and subordinated to the power regimes of the institution. A more empowering situation would be that in which they could have a say in the regulations they are subject to.

This section has elaborated on the strategies schoolgirls enact to resist transfer to night courses. By doing so, it has added to current knowledge by arguing that silence and invisibility can both resist and empower. By being silent and becoming invisible, pregnant schoolgirls are *de facto* challenging existing regulations and carving out spaces for themselves. This, in turn, can impact on the implementation of the regulations in the case of pregnant schoolgirls who manage to keep their pregnancy concealed, thus preventing transfer to night courses. This impact on regulations also affects how

pregnancy is interpreted in relation to education, as Mr Bemvindo, Director of Pedagogy at the Central School, claims:

*I have a couple of girls that I know got pregnant and had babies. They were in my class last year. I did not report them. I did not have the guts to do so. They did well, they continued in their class, and both had their babies during holidays. So now, this year I mean, they are back in day school. Nobody suspected, or nobody reported them.*

Mr Bemvindo is progressive in the way he talks about pregnancy and its perceived clashes with education. His ideas have developed in the classroom, as he has seen that pregnant girls are not necessarily any different from others. This process can be illuminated by Butler's notion of resignification (1990, 144). She writes:

*[since] The substantive 'I' only appears through a signifying practice that seeks to conceal its own workings and to naturalise its effects; the question of agency is reformulated as a question of how signification and resignification work.*

As discussed earlier, pregnant schoolgirls are subject to regulatory frameworks. More than that, they are produced by regulatory frameworks. By resisting them, as I discussed in this section, pregnant schoolgirls indicate to both embrace and respond to the regulation. By so doing, they are actively contributing towards the resignification of in-school pregnancy.

The next section will look at the spaces for resistance young people create in relation to family norms, strengthening the case for viewing in-school pregnancy as a site for resignification.

### 7.1.2 Resisting Family Norms

As discussed in Chapter 6, families are generally described by research participants as relying mainly upon traditional sets of norms in responding to pregnancies. If Chapter 6 has worked to render the complexities behind the uni-vocality of this perception, in this section I look at how young people resist that regulatory framework. As I did in Section 7.1.1., I argue that in resisting, young people create a space where they can weave their own identities. In this section I also include perspectives of young men interviewed in relation to their partners' or former partners' pregnancies.

Fathers are usually contacted quite early on by girls' families after the disclosure of a pregnancy, as a first attempt to initiate the various steps towards a formalisation of the couple's union. For many men confronted with being named as a father an initial response is to refuse to accept their part in a pregnancy. This was Zara's experience:

*He did not believe the baby was his, and this hurt the most. I realised that he did not trust me.*

The reasons for failing to accept a pregnancy<sup>46</sup> may be various. Trust, or the lack thereof, remains among the main ones, as the suspicion of multiple concurrent partnerships (MCP) looms large, as Felipe points out in a boys-only focus group:

*If a man refuses a pregnancy, even though he knows he had a relationship with that girl, it can mean a number of things. For instance he may be in a number of relationships at the same time. That does not mean necessarily that the girl is as well, but the fact that he is doing it may encourage him to believe she is doing the same.*

Hoffman *et al.* (2006) suggest that condom use may be occasional because it may imply infidelity and lack of trust within a relationship. Because of this, condoms tend to be avoided in steady relationships. It was for instance the experience of Ermelinda:

*We were using condoms at the beginning of our relationship, but then, because of trust, we stopped using them.*

This discourse is connected to the medicalisation of sex and sexuality discussed in Chapter 3: condoms are necessary as a protection against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), hence they become redundant when there is some stability in the relationship. Stability usually means exclusivity, suggesting that two faithful partners do not run the risk of contracting STDs, hence dismissing the need of contraception. Pregnancy in this context remains overlooked.

These findings resonate with others in southern Africa. Reddy & Dunne (2007) identify some tensions between the discourse of romantic love and that of safe sex. According to their findings from South Africa, girls may be prepared to compromise their sexual safety in order to increase their chances to love and be loved. Moreover, to even suggest

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<sup>46</sup> *Aceitar a gravidez*: literally translated as 'to accept a pregnancy'. Although a bit odd in its English translation, I have decided to retain the original construction as it entails both a modern and patriarchal connotation.

condom use would indicate a certain confidence in sexual practices, against the regime of the 'good' female, who is 'passive, innocent and unknowing' (165).

Manuel (2005) has explored factors preventing students' use of condoms in the urban area of Maputo. According to her interviewees, condoms are substitutes for love and trust, and are subsequently avoided by individuals engaged in stable and committed relationships (294). Yet, both young women and men may be involved in multiple sexual partnerships at the same time (refer to Section 3.4 for a more thorough elaboration of this). The interweaving of different orders of relationships with different needs, wants and desires paves the way to different possibilities for agency for men as opposed to women. The occurrence of a pregnancy ultimately implies a more de-traditionalised space for young men. Men have the option to leave, while women are required to confront the implications of pregnancy and childrearing.

Other reasons for leaving, as identified by a boys-only focus group organised in the Religious District School, may include a generalised sense of fear of making the wrong choices, of sacrificing youth and of disappointing family and friends by suddenly embracing a new identity – that of father, husband and, potentially, breadwinner. This is the case for Mr Mario, an older research participant, who recounts his experience of refusing to accept a pregnancy he knew he was responsible for:

*When I was 17 I had this one girlfriend. She was ok. I cannot remember being tremendously in love with her, nor disliking her. I was not thinking of settling down, or anything of that sort at that time in life. Anyways, I got her pregnant. When she came and told me, I got so terribly scared. Scared of making the wrong choice, scared of crippling my entire life. Scared of being trapped in a place I did not want to be in, and with a woman I did not want. I was so young. What if I had got myself stuck with the wrong woman? How could I even be sure that this baby she said she was expecting was mine? I mean, she could have had another boyfriend at the same time.*

*So I resolved to run away. That way, I had only myself to be responsible for. I did not have to be responsible for a pregnant girlfriend nor, later on, for a baby. You may say that I ran away because I could. She clearly could not run away from her own body. And you would be right. Still, there is no solution for this. I could run away, and I did. She did not. She tried to go ask*

*for me, with her parents, to my parents. I just managed to go stay with some other relatives and did not get back in touch. Did I ruin her life? Maybe. Or maybe she just managed to do well for herself and had a family who looked after her and the baby.*

Mr Mario recounts this story lucidly. He is now married, his kids have grown up and he believes he did everybody a favour by running away. This point is revealing because it triggers another consideration. Resistance to family norms may also be a consequence of a renewed scepticism towards traditional regulations. The politics of accepting a pregnancy do not simply include a binary opposition of outcomes, acceptance or refusal. Accepting a pregnancy may mean little if the couple breaks up and there is no continuing support, as raised by Paulo in a boys-only focus group:

*What if a man accepts a pregnancy then goes to South Africa to look for work, and at some point stops sending news or being in touch? Is this any better than not accepting? If a man does not accept, at least you know what cards you have to play. If he accepts, well to be honest, you can't be sure of anything.*

Scepticism over traditional regulations of accepting a pregnancy may also extend to those that have followed the traditional path, and formalised their relationship through at least one of the steps of marriage, as is the case for Idini:

*What do you think will happen in the future? It is very hard to get by. The baby is quite stressful to manage, and although we have some help from our families, we are responsible for him. Last but not least, we have to get along between the two of us. That is not easy given the circumstances. Honestly, I am not sure we will stay together in the long run.*

It is still Idini who makes some very personal considerations about the politics of accepting a pregnancy:

*I thought I was doing the right thing in accepting the pregnancy, and to some extent I did because the baby is my son. However, those who judge guys who do not accept pregnancies are wrong in thinking that everything will go fine if only they accepted. To accept a pregnancy is not a recipe for a happy ending. Quite on the contrary, it can be a recipe for disaster. Instead, not accepting just involves an ending, and it can be quite natural.*

Failing to accept a pregnancy does not necessarily contribute towards a definite negative predicament for a girl and her family. In the long run, it may figure as a strategy to assert oneself against a given set of regulations. This may accrue positive outcomes, both for girls and for boys.

Girls themselves may want to resist traditional norms by arguing to remain in their own homes as opposed to moving in with the in-laws, as Cristina did:

*This is my experience. I got pregnant, and I considered abortion. Then I started to like being pregnant. I discussed it over with my boyfriend, and together with our families. However, I did not want to move in my in-laws... it is very easy with my parents, they help me out and I do not have to prove anything. Also, I do not like my mother in law: why would I want to move in with her?*

Moving in with the family of the father of the baby is not just a simple change of context and of power relations within the family. It also entails new responsibilities and possibly different chores that may encourage girls to change their routine. Schooling was often raised in this respect, as young research participants linked their preference to remaining with their own families with a desire to remain in education. Cristina expanded on her story:

*When we decided what to do, I said it clearly that I wanted to keep going to school. My in-laws said it was going to be difficult, because I would have had to do house chores. It is for this reason that I decided to stay at home, to remain living with my mother instead of moving in with them.*

Cristina's experience is not uncommon. Alzira's story, discussed in Section 5.2.1, can be read along the same lines:

*I wanted to keep the baby, but I also wanted to go to school at the same time. So we decided that the best solution was for me to keep living with my mother, even if me and my boyfriend were – and are - still together.*

These experiences talk back to the sets of binary concepts or systematic chain (Derrida, 1988) this study has developed around the dichotomy education/pregnancy. These oppositions are perceived by young people, but at the same time often crossed in the performances of their identity. Young people want to be 'modern' – go to school, finish their degree, graduate – but they also strive to maintain some continuity with what they

perceive and construct as being more 'traditional'. Their identities are generally not fulfilled within one or the other realm, but play out through a constant crossing boundaries.

These crossings can be illuminated through the concept of permanent liminality (Szakolczai, 2000). Moving in with the in-laws corresponds to taking on board new sets of responsibilities and ultimately embracing more traditional discourses of adulthood. Remaining with one's own family allows young people to resist that discourse and to navigate different spaces of modernity. Alzira for instance, well represented the physical movement between the different sites of her identity work. She lived at home with her family and attended day classes. At the same time, she frequented her in-laws on a daily basis, and maintained her relationship with the father of her child.

If pregnancy is likely to cause a number of conflicts on different levels, this begs the question: why do people fail to rely on contraceptive methods?

### 7.1.3 Resisting Discourses of Contraception

This section will consider the medicalisation of sexual health by looking at how young people responded to contraceptives. Data from Mozambique (INE, 2001) indicate that knowledge of contraceptives methods<sup>47</sup> is quite high among teenagers, the highest being the condom, known about by 84.8% of interviewed girls and 95.5% of interviewed boys. According to 63.7% of girls and 90.5% of boys surveyed (INE, 2001) the condom is perceived as the safest contraceptive, offering the highest protection against both STDs and pregnancy. This perspective, however, is not indicative of usage, as less than 10% of the interviewees reported having used any contraceptive during the first time they had sex. Development discourses have often argued that both STDs and pregnancies occur because young people lack basic information about contraception. Campaigns have subsequently developed as information campaigns, in which seminars and workshops are organised throughout the country in order to spread contraception information, thereby enabling individuals to take precautions when having sex.

This fits with a modern conceptualisation of the subject. Instead, I argue in this thesis for a more nuanced theorisation of the self, whereby individuals navigate different

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<sup>47</sup> Condom, birth-control pill, intra-uterine devices, monthly injection, and sterilization are the contraceptive methods surveyed by INE (2001).



regulatory frameworks and do not necessarily carry out a cost-benefit analysis of their actions before acting. They are more likely to suture (Hall, 1996) their behaviours - and thereby render them intelligible – to different sets of norms, concurrently or at different times. This constant overlapping of processes of signification and resignification cannot be adequately framed within modern conceptualisations of the subject. As argued in previous chapters (Chapter 3 and Chapter 5) such conceptualisations fail to render in-school pregnancy intelligible. Ms Alice, of MINED District Services, expresses her confusion in approaching in-school pregnancy:

*I think teenage pregnancy is a 'bicho de sete cabezas'<sup>48</sup>. We organize seminars and talks in schools to teach what is important and what is not. We do believe that there is no future for girls if they get pregnant while they are in school. However, we have noted that the number of pregnancy keeps being quite high, regardless of our effort to try and reduce it. That means that our prevention techniques do not really work. We think that seminars and workshops would increase knowledge and thereby modify behaviour. But this is not really the case. There is something between knowledge and behaviour that prevents a connection between the two.*

Ms Alice relies on medicalised jargon as she talks of 'prevention techniques' in relation to in-school pregnancy. These are deployed towards the regulation of subjects framed within modern understandings: by giving them information deemed to be 'true' in a positivistic sense, this approach aims at modifying individual behaviour. At the same time, there is the understanding that giving young people knowledge would also empower them into making different, more informed choices. However, this quote also suggests that knowledge and behaviour may not be connected in a rational causal relation.

What this approach overlooks is that there exists a different type of knowledge that may conflict with that pushed forward through the medicalisation of sexual health. This knowledge is rooted in more traditional understandings of sex and sexuality, but is also constantly reworked through individuals' constant liminalities in navigating different

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<sup>48</sup> Mythical animal with seven heads – rhetoric figure used to describe something that is hard to understand, and to tame due to presenting multiple problems at the same time.

regulatory frameworks. Condoms<sup>49</sup>, for instance, clash with local culture and tradition, in that they represent a physical barrier for the exchange of bodily fluids, thought to have a number of beneficial properties, as girls engaged in a gender specific focus group suggested:

*Sex is purifying. Sex is a very important basis of traditional medicine here. And if you start thinking of condoms this way, you can see why people have a strong dislike for them. While condoms protect against the spreading of diseases and unwanted pregnancies, they also prevent the process of purification from taking place.*

There are meanings attached to sex that clearly discourage the use of condoms. Young people, although exposed and subjected to different regulatory frameworks such as those constructed through sexual health development discourses, are still aware of these traditional meanings and partly rely on them. A consequence is a lack of trust towards means of contraception that entirely prevent any continuity with local frameworks. The same lack of trust impacts discourses of development connected to condoms, as Ms Maria, technical advisor to an international NGO, suggests:

*People develop alternative narratives. For instance some believe condoms are actually vessels for the spreading HIV/AIDS: using them exposes you to the disease. Apparently you can prove it by filling a condom with water. If you look at it then, you will be able to spot different particles floating about in that water. For them those particles are viruses. Obviously what they see is some lubricant that floats in the water, and for me and you this is pretty basic information. But how do you convince them?*

This anecdote enables the drawing together of some connections between contraception and colonialism. Contraceptives rely on a socio-cultural framework that does not belong to Mozambique, but has been developed elsewhere. In this sense, the imposition of contraception cannot but assume the contours of a postcolonial struggle between local and western knowledge. Similarly, the very same idea that you may want to limit your fertility is problematic in a country that values individuals for the number of children they have, as Lidia suggested:

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<sup>49</sup> I am considering mainly condoms, as they are the most accessible and used form of contraception in Mozambique.

*I was aware of the consequences of my actions. Still, I did not use any contraception. I was afraid of going on the pill. I heard that if you get on the pill, then you are going to have problems in getting pregnant, once you feel ready for it.*

In this sense, getting pregnant too early is far better than not getting pregnant at all. Risking a pregnancy is a fair price to pay in order not to risk infertility later on.

This disconnect between different meanings and layers of understanding leads professionals working in the field of sexual and reproductive health to fantasise about a hypothetical ‘missing link’ between knowledge and behaviour. Giving visibility to the array of different meanings individuals and groups attach to sex and pregnancy contributes instead to a different consideration, that there is no missing link between knowledge and behaviour. There are, instead, different meanings and different sets of norms, which individuals embrace concurrently or at different times in order to create narratives of their identity, and thereby render their own selves intelligible.

The next section will develop this perspective further, suggesting that these spaces of resistance and the disconnect between different regulatory frameworks may be sites where individual agency plays out.

## 7.2 From Resistance to Agency

Section 7.1 has explored and engaged with different instances of individual resistance: resistance to school regulations, to family norms and to the ever present medicalised discourse of contraception. It is through these forms of resistance that a different layer of understanding becomes visible; one that refuses to consider all pregnancies as unwanted, or as contraceptive failures and one that tries to identify individual instances of resistances in order to produce a map of how individual agency functions.

This section will thus make the analytical shift between resistance, intended towards one or more regulatory frameworks, and agency, intended as the reflexive journey subjects engage in while they construct narratives of their identities. This entails the development of a more refined understanding of in-school pregnancy, which is not necessarily unwanted, unplanned and contagious as it is instead constructed through the

interpretation of the Decree 39/GM/2003. In interpreting in-school pregnancy as a lens or a prism, a diffracted conceptualisation of the subject can be brought forward.

### 7.2.1 Individual Will

As Section 1.5 explains, this doctoral study developed as a journey, in that the place where I started is not the same place where I find myself now. Equipped with modern values of agency and self-realisation, I approached the field trying to understand why it was that girls were getting pregnant and having children when it clearly had so much of a downside. However, introducing pregnancy and childbearing in these terms during my fieldwork led conversations into dead-end avenues. Many participants seemed to indicate there was no agency involved in their pregnancy. They would easily claim that their pregnancy was ‘what god wanted’ or that it ‘just happened’, like Concepção:

*Let’s talk about your first pregnancy. Ah what can I say? It happened.*

I struggled to come to terms with this, to the point that in some ways, the rest of my fieldwork was subtly but surely aiming at locating individual agency. I started to realise that individuals may desire pregnancy for a number of different reasons, which were gender specific, and not necessarily connected to parenthood. Girls, for instance, tended to consider pregnancy as a natural development of a relationship, as the conversation in a girls-only focus group suggested:

*I think a girl can see pregnancy as normal, like a normal development in the relationship.*

Such a position does not require potential plans for offspring to be discussed with the other party of the couple. In other words, there is no need to *decide* to try for a pregnancy, because ‘it will just happen’ to a healthy, heterosexual and sexually active couple. This is in line with Fennell (2006), who holds that the null hypothesis with sex is indeed pregnancy, as individuals have to make an active choice only in the case they do not want to get pregnant or else, that ‘passive decision-making results in a birth’ (25-26), as exemplified by the story of Claudia:

*I was attending 5<sup>th</sup> grade when I got pregnant the first time. No, it was not planned, or wanted. It just happened. I was not taking or doing anything to prevent it from happening.*

Conversely, individuals may as well have very clear reasons to pursue a pregnancy. Some participants indicated for instance that they were ‘testing their bodies’ when they got pregnant, like Zara:

*Now I know I was very naïve in just wanting to experiment with my body.*

A sense of curiosity towards one’s body, and the ways a pregnancy changes it, permeates many of the stories girls shared with me during my fieldwork in Mozambique. This feeling weaves in well in a socio-cultural context where offspring are particularly valued, as a girl-only focus group indicated:

*I think it is good for a woman to know that she can have children.*

This perspective can be read as a form of rewriting traditional norms, and establishing a sense of continuity with them. As Chapter 6 suggested, pregnancy can be a traditional way to state one’s fertility in front of the entire community. In this case, in-school pregnancy can be re-inscribed within a traditional regulatory framework and made intelligible that way.

Testing one’s body does not pertain to girls only. Boys also have their own interests in checking their reproductive capacity, and confirming their own sense of masculinity, a boys-only focus group claimed:

*Getting a girl pregnant is important for a boy, because it states his reproductive capacity, and it does so in front of the eyes of everybody. A guy can be unsure of whether he can have children or not, and managing to get a girl pregnant is a very important self-discovery. This is regardless to whether he accepts or not the pregnancy.*

Pregnancy thus becomes for both parties a process of self-discovery and self-construction. Young people *use it* as a means towards identity building. Consider Vovó Rainha talking about her niece’s boyfriend:

*Look at the case of my niece here. She has a baby, but the father did not accept responsibility for him. He thinks he is too young, that it is too early for him to settle down and take care of a baby. He should go out with his friends and have fun, not go to work because he has to make sure his baby is fed! He enjoys having other women and just leading that type of life you see, with no responsibilities. At the same time, however, I am sure he thinks*

*there is something good, valuable about having a baby, even if he does not take care of it. I see him passing by here sometimes, with his mates. He looks at the baby, points him out to his friends and tells them that yes, that is his baby. Why does he do that and not feel bad about abandoning the two of them? That is really not clear to me, but that is what he does.*

This quote can be illuminated by a theoretical conceptualisation of the subject as a traveller (Osório & Cruz e Silva, 2008), someone who continuously crosses dichotomies and regulatory frameworks, rendering his own identity a patchwork, a constant work-in-progress. The young man considered by Vovó Rainha has embraced a traditional identity by valuing his offspring, as indicated by his ‘boasting’ behaviour with his friends. Moreover, he has also embraced other, more de-traditionalised norms by failing to support his child and former partner. The interweaving of multiple modernities enables this coexistence of multiple and contrasting identities. Yet, it is imperative to note how these may entail different agentic possibilities for men and women.

Beyond the desire to test one’s body, girls may pursue a pregnancy as a means of securing their relationship, as Mr José, of the Central School, suggested:

*Girls are scared of losing their boyfriends, and they see pregnancy as a way to cement their relationship. In this sense, pregnancies are wanted, and maybe even planned! But for the wrong reasons...*

Resorting to having a baby as a means to secure a relationship seems quite an extreme measure. Some respondents from a girls-only focus group viewed girls as lacking agency in this respect:

*Us girls, we have no choice if we want to keep our boyfriends, we have to give up to their requests.*

‘Their requests’ ranged from demanding unprotected sex to actively trying for a pregnancy. However, girls are not necessarily powerless in this as they may enact different strategies in order to keep their partners, or what goes under the saying *ter homens na garrafa* [keep men in the bottle], said Cecilia in a girl-only focus group:

*We need to... how they say ‘ter homens na garrafa’, keep them inside the house.*

Strategies aimed at ‘keeping men in the bottle’ have been researched and theorised by Groes-Green (2013) in relation to transactional sex in Maputo. In his analysis, Groes-Green considers the impact of such strategies upon what he defines as ‘gendered triads of reciprocity’ (107) created by the relations between a girl and her partner/sponsor on the one hand and between the girl and her female kin on the other. Yet, I argue that it would be difficult to distinguish those relations that are clearly transactional and those which are only romantic as the interweaving of financial and romantic aspects is tight, especially in a country like Mozambique, where people find it hard to make ends meet. Ms Nelia, MINED District Services, argues:

*Most adults will look down at them [pregnant girls], and consider those pregnancies as mistakes, or unwanted. They will think girls got pregnant out of ignorance, and boys got them pregnant because they do not like to use condoms. I do not agree with those views. I think those pregnancies are very much wanted. You know why? Because people still struggle to get to the end of the month, to make ends meet. To get married is still the best option, if you want to survive, if you want to sustain yourself and your family.*

*Getting married is a livelihood strategy then?*

*Absolutely. What I am not sure about, is who pursues it the most. Is it girls by trying to get pregnant? Is it their parents by marrying them off? That I do not know.*

Considering pregnancies as livelihood strategies may be controversial. At the same time, it offers a lot of insight into young people’s lives and the choices they make. According to Ximena Andrade, lecturer at the UEM, the potential gains of a pregnancy are well known to most girls, and she refers to their pregnancies as *golpe da barriga* (belly coup):

*Girls themselves want to be pregnant and have the baby. The objective is to secure a man but also to demonstrate reproductive capacity in front of their families and communities. They do what is known as ‘golpe da barriga’.*

By agreeing to have unprotected sex, girls may be actively trying to become pregnant, relying on the chances that their partner will behave according to their traditional role and accept responsibility. This way, even if it is not clear who the decision maker is, a breadwinner becomes clear. Cristina’s story, discussed in Section 7.1.2, indicates that

using pregnancy as a livelihood strategy may be a good investment. Even if her relationship is not working out, she and her family are receiving a monthly stipend, which is allowing her to remain in education. Her story subverts the mainstream discourse of pregnancy and parenthood as being an obstacle to girls' education, suggesting that pregnancy and schooling are not necessarily in opposition. Cristina's experience is not exceptional, as providing some financial support seems a compromise between accepting a pregnancy and denying it, as George suggests:

*Since me and that girl were not in a relationship, and we had no plans to be, we [boy and his family] figured it made more sense to help them out from afar. I accepted the pregnancy, and started to send monthly payments to help them out with the baby. That is all.*

Pursuing a pregnancy as a livelihood strategy is perceived to occur often. This may be detrimental, as young men recognise the chance of being used may be quite high, lamented Zelio in a boys-only focus group:

*Haven't you realised that girls have their own agendas? Do not fall in the trap of seeing them as powerless victims of us, powerful guys.*

This is in line with Hawkins, Mussà & Abuxahama (2005, iv), according to whom girls are far from perceiving themselves as victims:

*Rather, they are active agents involved in a continuing process of defining their social and sexual identity and making choices about the risks they engage in. Transactional sex is conceptualized as a strategy by which they are able to reverse the existing balance of gender and sex relations. Through the power of their sexuality, young women are able to extract financial resources from men in order to access the material goods and life-style that symbolizes modernity and success. Young women refer to this strategy as 'to sengue' derived from the Portuguese adaptation of a local term 'sengar', meaning 'to milk the cow'.*

'Milking the cow' through transactional sex in order to access material goods is one way to frame girls' agency, and move away from a process of victimisation that this study has opposed already through the discussion of the policy text 397GM/2003. Moreover, I argue that the implications of such strategies can be extended. Material goods are not the sole symbols of modernity. Schooling and gaining a degree have been



defined here as tool for modernisation as brought forth by development discourses. Cristina's story has suggested that a pregnancy may as well be 'used' in order to invest in education.

Girls who engage in transactional sex do not only realize their livelihood strategy. They do so by crossing normative frameworks. Transactional sex is generally combined with intergenerational sex, implying a relationship with an older man. Intergenerational sex has a cultural component as men were traditionally required to pay a bride-price. To do that, they either had to rely on their family's assets or call upon assets saved over time. The result was that age gaps between man and wife were not rare (Lubkemann, 2000). By making use of a cultural prescription that encourages girls to date older men in order to gain access to what they perceive to be a modern identity, girls resist the social structure and manipulate traditional norms to fit with their aims. In turn, they construct their identities in the liminal spaces between the different frameworks, positioning themselves as ever-shifting subjects.

In this section I have worked towards locating individual agency. At the same time, I am aware that there are limitations to positioning it entirely within individuals. Calling for a consideration of the economic context, for instance, pushes the conversation beyond the boundaries of the self. This requires the analysis to include interactions and different levels of relations, which is where the discussion now turns.

### 7.2.2 Collective Action

The concept of a gendered triad of reciprocity (Groes-Green, 2013), introduced in Section 7.2.1, is illuminating as it creates different levels of understanding of couples' interactions, which go beyond the couple itself to consider the ways in which other relationships – mainly those with female relatives – may have an impact. Pregnancy, for instance, is inherently characterised by a certain degree of *visibility*. The change occurring to one's body is also a change that is communicated to others, an aspect that is particularly valued in a context where individual identity is also assessed by means of its connectedness to the community. This is what Carlos, participating in a boys-only focus group, contended:

*I think there is a form of influence that affects men as well. Men are proud to have offspring, when they see other men that can boast about their kids, that is when we feel influenced in wanting to do the same.*

Offspring have an inherent value for boys and men even if they are not taken care of: the act of recognising them as your own, even if not openly accepting a pregnancy, establishes a lineage and connects with ancestral ties, explains Father José, Headteacher at the Religious District School:

*Familial ties can be very ephemeral at times, like in the case of partnerships or marriages. Vertical relationships instead, can be very strong. For instance once a baby has been recognised by its father, that tie is going to be there forever, even if it does not correspond to a practical relationship.*

The strength of vertical connections links back to the traditional institution of kinship, which in the South of the country is structured around patrilinearity. This is in line with Oyěwùmí (2000, 1096), who argues that:

*[...] the predominant principle organizing African families has been consanguinal and not conjugal: blood relationships constitute the core of family.*

This seems to suggest that needs and desires located at the level of the individual are directly associated with community and socio-cultural contexts, creating a gap at the level of the couple. This level offers relatively little in constructing a shared view of pregnancy and parenthood<sup>50</sup>. In other words, both parties of the couple may have their reasons for getting pregnant. However, these are not necessarily communicated, and not necessarily in agreement. So a girl may want to get pregnant for the reasons detailed above and a boy may want the same, yet still fail to accept responsibility.

Pregnancy thus establishes some continuity between individuals and their perceptions of traditional values. In this sense, it acts as a symbolic connection between individuals and their social and cultural context, which entails a preference for vertical relations (the patrilinear kin group) over horizontal ones (partners). In other words, pregnancies reinforce kinship, but not necessarily connections between partners. This view is in line with Fennell (2006, 4), who maintains that

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<sup>50</sup> This, of course, may be a methodological bias brought about by interviewing individuals and not producing data concerning couples.

*[...] People's sexual behaviour is guided by many social concerns other than their fertility goals, and the social context of sexual interactions can explicitly interfere with the achievement of fertility goals.*

According to Fennell the extended community may attribute specific meanings or consequences to pregnancy and parenthood. Similarly, this resonates with Cornwall's concept of socially embedded reproductive choice, discussed in Section 3.5.1. Looking at pregnancy and parenthood in this light encourages a furtherance of the discussion by considering the part played by agency. In Lovell's words (2003, 2):

*Agency lies in the interstices of interaction, in collective social movements in formation in specific circumstances, rather than in the fissures of a never-fully-constituted self.*

Considering the relational aspects of pregnancy supports therefore a co-constructed type of agency, as discussed in Section 3.6.1. Embracing this definition of agency is particularly productive for me, as it allows me to interpret the difficulties I initially encountered in locating agency. These were mainly due to the complexities and interconnections of different dimensions and levels of interaction. The interplay of these also contributes to agentic attitudes conflicting with one another.

This consideration of agency is key at this point of the discussion. It permits me to look beyond modern conceptualisations of pregnancy as unplanned and unwanted, and to identify individual and collective will driving behaviour. Recognising the coexistence of multiple and often opposing discourses also suggests that young people concurrently embrace them. I will discuss this aspect in the next section.

### 7.2.3 Itineraries of the Self

Chapter 5 and 6 have argued that in-school pregnancy may act as a rite of passage in signalling that young people have become adults. In this sense, pregnancy and parenthood are characterised in opposition to education, and the two are perceived as being in a dichotomous relation. This chapter has however argued that young people tend to resist regulatory frameworks and continually construct their own identities, borrowing from different frames, and adjusting norms and regulations to their specific circumstances. In this sense, pregnancy and schooling are not perceived as mutually exclusive, as Cristina suggested:

*I manage to do both things. It is true that I need some help, and I probably would not be able to do so if I were on my own, but I manage to raise my kid, and come to school. To have children, in my experience, does not impede anything.*

As already discussed, Cristina can rely on the help of her family and on a monthly salary from the family of the father of her child. Yet, the specific construction of the family in Mozambique (discussed in Chapter 2 and 3) suggests that there is scope for shared childrearing, which would not leave (young) mothers in the condition of having to completely fend for themselves. Young people participating in this study generally resisted the dichotomisation of school and parenthood also by resisting the construction of pregnancy as a rite of passage that does not leave any time or space for formal education. Herminia, who had two children and attended night courses, explains:

*I have always been very fond of school, I always liked going to school. I gave birth on a Friday, and on the Monday I was back at school.*

In Herminia's experience, the passage between becoming (and being) a mother and being a schoolgirl was quite fluid and she easily made jokes about how lucky she was in giving birth on a Friday. By resisting the dichotomy between pregnancy and schooling, young women also resist the passage to adulthood that is often implicit in a pregnancy. Catarina for instance claims:

*Being a mother has not changed who I am, I am who I am.*

By identifying herself with this tautology, Catarina resists an attribution of identity that works alongside the binary of childhood and adulthood, as many other respondents. Ruth for instance, explained:

*They say motherhood makes you become an adult, but I do not really feel like that. I do not feel more of an adult.*

Similar concerns were expressed by Ersilia, who was five months pregnant and had just been transferred to night courses:

*They say you become a woman as you become a mother. Should I expect a big change? Honestly, I do not see it coming. I am the same girl I was before getting pregnant, I want the same things, I have the same needs.*

What is at stake in these quotes is a conceptualisation of what adulthood actually means. Young people taking part in this study found it difficult to identify changes in their identity after their pregnancy. Adulthood, in their words, remains the ‘other’ - what they are not. This is what Celeste suggested by commenting on night courses:

*I did not like the behaviour of those attending night courses. They were all adults, so playing was not permitted... it was a different attitude.*

Celeste was transferred to night courses following the disclosure of her pregnancy to school staff. She claimed that her pregnancy did not make her feel more of an adult. Instead, she felt her night class was quite distant from her, and felt her class colleagues represented adulthood to her. Her experience supports the claim made in Chapter 5 that throw-out may better describe pregnancy-related school dropouts. At the same time, it stretches the extent of throw-outs by suggesting that they may encourage young people to become adults more than pregnancy and parenthood do. This is consistent with Delfina’s comments:

*Taking that away [day classes] forces you to think about your relationship with them [classmates], to conceptualize it, to plan and schedule ahead if you want to meet. That is really when you feel left out, when you feel you have been pushed out of childhood, of some things you took for granted.*

Delfina connects her definition of childhood with a certain attitude of taking peer relationships for granted. Removing girls from that context forces them to reconceptualise them, and to plan for them. In this sense, transferring girls to night courses becomes a tool for categorising individual identities within the binary of childhood and adulthood.

These stories have suggested that girls invoke different discourses in framing their pregnancies. As a consequence their identities play out as a constant movement across regulatory frameworks. By so doing, they both render themselves intelligible according to different standards, and constantly reconstruct those discursive formations through their own performances. It is through this repetition, and the different discourses invoked, that individuals contribute to processes of resignification and enact change. As this thesis has argued, the interweaving of various processes of change cannot be adequately framed within a context of progressive modernisation. Instead, the notion of

multiple modernities better illuminates the case of Mozambique, where it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish between tradition and modernity.

### 7.3 Summary

This chapter concludes the analytical section of this thesis by engaging with Research Question 3: How do young people – young women – navigate the available discourses in the performance of their identities? In Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 I have discussed the regulatory frameworks and discourses constructing in-school pregnancy. In this chapter I have focused on how pregnant schoolgirls and others understand and navigate the different regulatory frameworks in the production of their identities.

I have also highlighted the spaces for agency, the appropriation of multiple discourses and the reciprocal (de-)construction of their discursive framing. In these processes, I have argued that pregnant schoolgirls, whilst being constructed by discursive norms, also resist and react to them. This practice, I have suggested, can be associated with processes of resignification based upon the repetition of signification in different contexts. In this sense, the very same agency girls exert in resisting institutional regulation of pregnancy has the effect of aiming to dislocate the education/pregnancy dichotomy by asserting that pregnant schoolgirls – and young mothers – can receive a formal education.

In-school pregnancy can act as a tool for the categorisation and regulation of individual identity. Yet in this chapter I have attempted to employ a more fluid concept of the self and the ways that individual positioning is produced through the navigation between multiple discourses and their disciplinary work. In particular I have tried to trace the ways through which pregnant schoolgirls construct their sense of self through both relying on the ‘vocabularies’ offered by different discourses, hence subjectifying themselves through regulatory frameworks at their disposal, as well as pushing their boundaries.

This way, my analysis of in-school pregnancy has illustrated the need to move beyond a modern conceptualisation of the subject. Identity building cannot be adequately framed within the project of the Enlightenment, but it can be insightfully illuminated as a constant movement in-between and across different sets of norms. The outcome is often

a multi-layered and conflicting patchwork, which makes sense contingently, but may leave proponents of the Enlightenment (and of development) somewhat at a loss.

## 8. Conclusions

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*Why would a girl do something that she knows is going to have a negative impact on her wellbeing? Why do you ask us what do we want, and we say we want the power to decide about our lives and future, we want education, a fulfilling job and a loving family, but still end up with something totally different? Because, I am telling you, those girls who get pregnant while they are in school are not different from us... they are us. The difference between an empowered and a powerless person is that the first has the time and the space to understand what she wants for herself. She does not rely on what other people want or think is right for her.*

*(Afânia, 24, focus group, Maputo)*

Afânia strongly stresses the language of choice in relation to personal wellbeing and self-determination. Within this focus group, other girls disagreed, highlighting the homogeneity and universality of her claim and pointing to the importance of context in shaping girls' needs. Afânia accepts the criticism, she says of herself 'I am too masculine', in that she wears the hat of the decision maker, a hat - I have argued at different points of Chapter 6 - traditionally the remit of men within Mozambican society.

Afânia also raises a key point in the debate around in-school pregnancy: the relation between an individual and their context. In her words, how an individual positions themselves within this relationship may make all the difference between empowerment and powerlessness. In other words, Afânia is invoking the difference between being subjected to regulatory frameworks, and positioning oneself in a dialogic position with the available discourses. This possibility – the possibility of agency – is what I have argued for in representing girls' resistances to regulations as both forms of subjectification and resignification.

I start off this concluding chapter with Afânia's words because they succinctly represent the tensions between discourses and the subject that I have endeavoured to discuss throughout this thesis. By claiming that 'those girls getting pregnant while they are in school are not different from us... they are us', Afânia dissolves the construction of the



in-school mother produced by institutional regimes. By stating the difference between being powerless and being empowered, she emphasises the tensions entailed by processes of identity work.

These are the main themes explored by this study. I further articulate and elaborate them in the first section of this final chapter. In the second section, I consider the wider insights offered by this thesis to the unpacking of the education-pregnancy nexus: this thesis contributes to current understandings of this, and adds important knowledge to how young people perform their identities in Mozambique. Beyond this substantial claim, it also pushes theoretical boundaries by proposing an integration of the concept of multiple modernities with post-structural conceptualisations of the subject. This second section continues by engaging with the policy implications of this study. Section 8.2.3 discusses some aspects of my personal journey into this study, thinking reflexively about how this research has affected my identity as an academic and a researcher. Last, I introduce some research gaps that remain, and which future studies should address.

## 8.1 Research Findings

This study explored in-school pregnancy with the aim of working through its framing in policy prescriptions and its implications for practice especially for those subject to its regulation – pregnant schoolgirls. The aim was to deconstruct in-school pregnancy as a discursive and disciplinary construct and to explore the multiplicity of responses within local settings. The research questions were thus developed as follows:

- How do education policy and practice frame in-school pregnancy in Mozambique?
- How do families interpret and regulate in-school pregnancy?
- How do young people – particularly young women – navigate the available discourses in the performance of their identities?

This section articulates findings around each question.

### 8.1.1 Research Question 1

*How do education policy and practice frame in-school pregnancy in Mozambique?*

This research question has required a critical policy analysis supplemented by interview data, articulated in Chapter 5. Through the analysis, I engaged with the current policy developed in Mozambique, ministerial Decree 39/GM/2003, which clarifies the position of the state in relation to in-school pregnancies. More specifically it stipulates that pregnant girls should be transferred from day to night courses, along with their partners, should they be enrolled in the same schools. Should these be members of school staff, they should be removed from their positions, and prosecuted for breaching the law.

In this chapter I carried out a textual analysis of the decree that shows a specific construction of in-school pregnancy. Pregnancy is first described as unwanted and unplanned in a period of life labelled as 'adolescence'. This term, developed within the field of psychiatry (Hall, 1904), carries negative connotations associated with deviance and points to a conceptualisation of a life course where age phases are essentialised. The use itself of the term contributes to connoting in-school pregnancy negatively. By relying on this, I have argued in Chapter 5 that the policy constructs a notion of schooling that implies the child, while sex and pregnancy are confined to adulthood.

Decree 39/GM/2003 produces in-school pregnancy as an oxymoron by associating childhood with schooling and adulthood with pregnancy. This is connected to how pregnancy is described by the policy text as unwanted and unplanned. Both concepts of unwanted and unplanned imply a modern and rational consideration of pregnancy, whereby individuals engage in cost-benefit analysis before making decisions, and adapt their behaviours accordingly. In Chapter 5 I have relied both on literature and data generated through this study to argue for a more fluid conceptualisation of both wantedness and planning in relation to a pregnancy.

Decree 39/GM/2003 also constructs in-school pregnancies as crimes by employing the discourse of punishment. In my discussion, I have emphasised this as a point of tension in that the policy text both victimises and criminalises pregnant girls. They are victimised through an infantilisation of their identity, required by the institutional regime as part of its structure. At the same time, they are the ones to bear the brunt of the punishment, as I have argued that men rarely receive the same treatment.

Pregnancy is also constructed as contagious, to the same extent as a disease. Once again relying on medicalised approaches to pregnancy, the need to transfer pregnant girls to night courses is characterised as an attempt to separate them from their non-pregnant

classmates. By emphasising the difference between who is pregnant and who is not, the policy strengthens the implicit social threat of pregnancies, the notion that if left to remain in their day courses, pregnant girls may encourage – directly or indirectly – other girls to follow the same route.

In association with these discourses, in-school pregnancy is constructed as a negative event that needs to be avoided. Transferring girls to night courses is thus a way to protect non-pregnant girls from the threat of contagion. However, transfer acts as a double-edged sword in that it is also produced as a means to protect pregnant girls from the threat of discrimination, which is seen as being rife within peer groups. Here, in-school pregnancy is interpreted as requiring punishment, as it implies something wrong has been done, and girls, carrying the physical signs of it – are the ones who ultimately bear the brunt of such punishment.

The construction of a specific type of pregnancy, one that is unwanted, contagious and requiring containment is implicit in its regulation. Regulating in-school pregnancy in other words, is a wider process that includes the definition of the event it aims at managing. By inducing a certain interpretation of what pregnancy and parenthood mean during the school years, Decree 39/GM/2003 encourages negative reactions towards pregnant girls and paves the way for their regulation. In-school pregnancy is thus ultimately produced as a negative event, which carries the threat of disrupting individual development, particularly in terms of education, and which is thereby detrimental to wider society.

It comes as a consequence that girls who get pregnant while they are registered at school are to be transferred to night courses. This policy is constructed as being an improvement on the past, as it is the first national tool to regulate the occurrence of pregnancy within schools. Prior to that, the customary norm would have entailed the expulsion of pregnant schoolgirls. In this sense, transfer to night courses contains a somewhat progressive element, in that it allows pregnant girls and young mothers to remain in education and eventually graduate.

At the same time, this measure entails a form of ‘inclusion through exclusion’ (Foucault, 1994, 78) where some individuals are excluded from others in order to ‘embroil them in or ‘attach’ them to relations of power and knowledge’ (Deacon, 2006, 180). In other words, transferring pregnant schoolgirls to night courses serves the

purpose of differentiating between who is pregnant and who is not and, subsequently, between who is 'normal' and who is 'other'. The latter are the ones in need of normalisation and are separated and given to a different category. They are not children anymore, but adults, a distinction that will be discussed in response to research question number 2.

By regulating in-school pregnancy through a separation, this policy reproduces a myth of normality. This myth relies on a series of dichotomies, which identify the different discourses subsumed within the clash between education and parenthood. At the same time, this regulation of pregnancy acts *de facto* as a transfer of the management of the pregnancy from schools to their families, institutions who generally welcome pregnant girls.

This realisation was particularly relevant during my fieldwork, as it led both data collection and analysis towards a consideration of family and community contexts. These provided access to yet another type of regulation of pregnancy, which cannot but be considered alongside that produced by schools in the management of in-school pregnancies. School staff and families approached within this study kept referring to one another as distinct in relation to pregnancies, often initiating a dialogue which would unfailingly be interrupted as a consequence of the lack of productive fluidity between the two institutions. Nonetheless, it is this interrupted dialogue and the multiple itineraries young people perform between schools and families that lie at the core of the nexus pregnancy/parenthood, and which also contribute to its dichotomous relation.

### 8.1.2 Research Question 2

#### *How do families interpret and regulate in-school pregnancy?*

Families and schools have been constructed by research participants in a relation of otherness to one another. Families and communities are associated with traditions and roots but also with the limitations of backwardness, poverty and the constraints of life as it has always been, developed around socially accepted meanings and practices which leave little space for individual success. Schools, on the other hand, are often presented as the realm of options, where individuals have the chance to realise their individual potential and contribute to their country's development. This thesis has problematised this opposition, but it is important to emphasise here how multiple dichotomies

contribute to the distinction between education and pregnancy, rendering the binary very powerful.

In Chapter 6 I have thus discussed the implications of what seems a rigid set of mechanisms aimed at regulating pregnancy around individual identity. From the moment the news of a pregnancy is broken to family members, older generations are expected – and often do – take charge of the situation. This aspect raises important issues connected to body ownership and to how a Western emphasis on the individual fails to account for a multiplicity of perspectives over what the body is and how it should be regulated. This does not discount the role of the individual, but forces us to consider the ways in which individuals may be tightly interwoven with their communities and social contexts. In such contexts, a negotiation of body ownership is necessarily part of considerations of individual agency.

In this sense, the regulation of pregnancy presents itself as a case destabilising the primacy of the individual over their own body and hints at different forms of politics to which the body is subjected. More specifically, the communication of a pregnancy to the girl's family is followed by attempts to *transfer* the girl from her family to her partner's family. After this, the more formal steps of *apresentação*, *lobolo* and *casamento* may follow. A pregnancy offers thus the means for inscribing individual identity into a set of networks (families and relatives) and, even more strikingly, for defining such identity along the dimensions of gender and age.

Approaching families and communities about the regulation of in-school pregnancy has shed light on the reproduction of another regulatory framework. This develops out of more traditional norms of behaviour, stressing, for instance, gender identity and age hierarchy as strong dimensions of identity building in traditional Mozambique. At the same time, regulations developed within families, similarly to those developed within schools, are invoked as ideal types by individuals. This process of interpellation of norms plays out as a repetition and can be illuminated by the theoretical concept of resignification (Butler, 1990).

In this sense, this study has explored how in-school pregnancies may trigger regulations that are directed towards disciplining the individual and their identity. By necessarily confronting a variety of contingencies that are not directly considered by traditional frameworks (absence of partner, will to remain in education and to graduate), the

repetition of regulatory practices presents gaps that individuals are able to negotiate and adjust to their own circumstances. It is through these inexact repetitions that regulatory frameworks and individuals are tightly interwoven in bringing about social change.

Through the analyses carried out in Chapter 6 and 7, I have claimed that the regulation of pregnancy rests upon a number of binary oppositions connected around the initial education/pregnancy nexus through a systematic chain (Derrida, 1988). By *de facto* encouraging pregnant girls to leave school, current policy tools are reproducing the difference between development and backwardness, modernity and tradition and other notions, as illustrated by Figure 3:

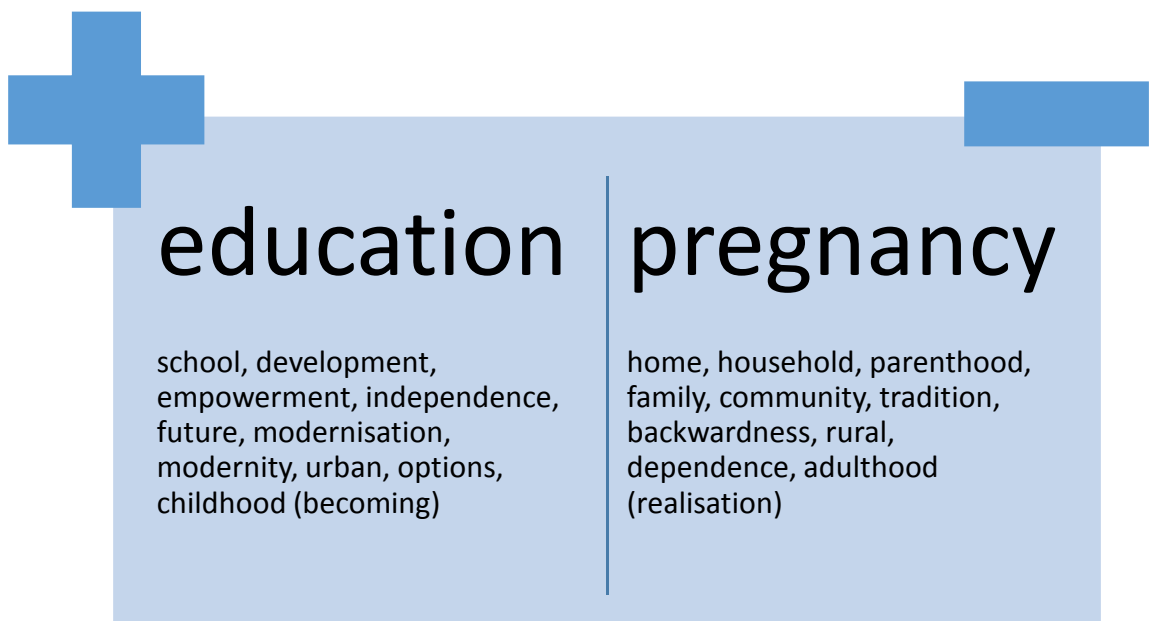


Figure 3: list of concepts and their binary oppositions (as raised by participants)

Figure 3 represents a very simplified depiction of data generated by this study. The nexus education/pregnancy relies on a number of binary oppositions where one side is associated with a positive feeling, whilst the other carries negativity and stigma. These discourses, and their relationship of opposition to one another, became a strong presence throughout my fieldwork, as they both prompted me to look closely within each category in order to render the complexities visible, and also to use this a backdrop against which to describe how individuals moved within and across categories in the performances of their identities (further expanded in Section 8.1.3).

Looking closely at families in connection to instances of tradition has allowed me to represent the complexities implied by shifting regulations. In this sense, I have not only engaged with the discourses families produce to interpret in-school pregnancies, but considered how families are produced within those very discourses. I have thus argued *against* the association family-tradition by representing social relations as being both fragile and dynamic, constantly reinterpreted and renegotiated within the interactions of individual performances.

Finally, I have concluded by looking at the other term of the opposition, schools, and its association with modernity. Through the voices of research participants, I have represented the doubts and educational shortcomings individuals confront when *choosing* to invest in education. By deliberately embracing a modernist standpoint, I have argued that schooling may not achieve its aims, gauged by research participants in terms of the efficacious training individuals receive, and of the employment opportunities they can go on to access. More specifically, this study has allowed me to develop a sense of the contingent nature of educational institutions, and of their position in the production of individual identity. The possibility of constructing one's identity within a context other than that of the family and immediate community, has been raised by some research participants as key in explaining their motivation to attend classes, and to resist in-school pregnancy regulation in the case of pregnant schoolgirls.

As anticipated, Figure 3 also prompted a consideration of how boundaries are crossed in the performance of individual identities, which will constitute an answer to Research Question 3.

### 8.1.3 Research Question 3

*How do young people – particularly young women – navigate the available discourses in the performance of their identities?*

Question 1 and Question 2 have directed the analysis towards regulatory frameworks constructing and disciplining in-school pregnancy in Mozambique. With this study, I have argued that it is not possible to understand regulatory frameworks in terms of binary couples such as the ones created by the opposition of tradition and modernity. The multi-linearity of processes of change requires subtle theoretical insight, which has been found within the concept of multiple modernities.

Furthermore, the analysis has focused on the interstices between different heteronormativities, suggesting that it is within these spaces that individual agency can be located. Question 3 thus encourages us to adopt the perspective of the subject in their inextricable connection within discursive formations. This outcome is a conceptualisation of the subject whose identity performances are derived by the invocation of different – often contrasting but yet concurrent – discourses. What follows is a succinct elaboration of this theoretical stance, developed by the analysis carried out in Chapter 8.

This study departs from traditional development concerns regarding the (negative) impact of in-school pregnancy on the development of girls and, subsequently, on transitioning countries as a whole. So many risks and downsides seem to be attached to pregnancy during the school years that it is inevitable to ask: why do people do it? Encouraged by a dissatisfaction with studies and reports conceptualising girls as victims, hence powerless, I have instead endeavoured to locate individual agency and, thereby, to put forth a nuanced conceptualisation of the subject.

A first attempt to locate agency has led me to consider instances of resistance young people enact towards regulatory frameworks tackling in-school pregnancy. The analysis has contended that young people resist multiple frameworks. For example, at school they actively hide their bodies in order to avoid transferral to night courses. This practice has been used to push the theoretical boundaries of silence and invisibility, traditionally considered a means of disempowerment and exclusion. The experience of pregnant schoolgirls has instead suggested that silence and invisibility can be successful means to inclusion and participation.

Young people also resist what they perceive to be more traditional regulatory frameworks; those reproduced within families and communities. In this sense, I have argued that processes of multiple modernities enable different possibilities for the individual. These are sometimes gender specific. For instance men are able to deny responsibility for a pregnancy, signalling a more de-traditionalised stance, whereby girls tend to raise their children in conjunction with other family members. Yet, this does not support a victimisation of young women. Chapter 8 has exposed various strategies through which girls exert their agency in connection to a pregnancy. These range from feelings of curiosity towards one's body, to a complex interweaving of modern and traditional invocations resulting in pregnancies acting as a means for their livelihood.



Considering both women and men, this study has put forth the claim that young people navigate different regulatory frameworks ‘suturing’ (Hall, 1996) their own stories to wider narratives in order to both make sense of them and to access the options each framework would make available to them. This has been the case for young men who do not accept responsibility for their offspring, but who boast about their fatherhood and their publically confirmed fertility to their peers. By so doing they invoke a modern discourse of childhood by claiming that they are not yet in the position to care for others as they have other plans ahead. At the same time, boasting about their fatherhood with peers signals that they also appropriate a more traditional perspective, whereby offspring confirm masculinity and ultimately enhance individual identity in front of the whole community.

Girls also navigate different normativities. The story of Cristina has been insightful in this sense. Cristina was receiving a monthly stipend from the family of the father of her child at the time of our interview. This money enabled her to continue going to school as her mother was looking after her baby. Cristina thus relied on a traditional outlook on pregnancy, whereby men are breadwinners and supposed to sustain their partner and children. At the same time, she was not completely abiding by traditional norms as she refused to move in with her in-laws as this would have entailed embracing a whole set of new domestic responsibilities. Instead, she was living with her own mother and invoking a modern conceptualisation of the subject as she pursued her education with the aim of securing employment.

These stories suggest that young people navigate across the boundaries of the systemic chain represented by Figure 3 above. At the same time, they do not negate them altogether, but embrace them either concurrently or subsequently. In Osório & Cruz e Silva’s words (2008, 237):

*This itinerary between tradition and modernity in which the former is losing or gaining new functions and in which the latter is to be localised through adaptations and reconversions constitutes, in our opinion, the decisive sign in the process of construction of young people’s identities.*

Subjects are thus travellers in the way they navigate different normativities and frame their actions within multiple discourses. This does not mean that identities are ‘free-floating’ (Humphreys, 2013), as they are constrained by social structures, as well as the

socio-historical development of the country. By conjoining their actions within different normativities, young people render themselves intelligible via different discursive formations, which are, in turn, both at the beginning and at the end of their performances. The act of suturing is not only the reflexive act of *doing* identities. It also figures as a repetition through which resignification occurs. In this sense, by performing their identities, young people also contribute to shifting regulatory frameworks. In other words, if multiple modernities enable different possibilities for the enactment of individual agency, it is also highly pertinent to consider of the ways in which performances of identity contribute to the creation, shifting, and overlapping of multiple processes of modernity.

## 8.2 Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis offers a number of new insights. At the outset, it adds to current knowledge on in-school pregnancy in Southern Africa, and Mozambique specifically by applying theoretical concepts, those of multiple modernities and permanent liminalities, that have not been employed previously in this context. It supports and strengthens local scholarship for what concerns the conceptualisation of both the family, and the subject. Moreover, it pushes theoretical boundaries by proposing an integration of the concept of multiple modernities (Eisenstadt, 2000; Kaya, 2004) alongside poststructural conceptualisations of the subject (Butler, 1990; Hall, 1996).

Containing a critical examination of the existing policy, this study also has some practical policy implications, discussed in Section 8.2.2. Inevitably, a doctoral project is also a personal journey into academia and a training ground for what might follow after. The insights that it has invoked do not only add to existing knowledges. They have contributed to shifting my own position with regard to in-school pregnancy. In this vein, I therefore conclude this final section by identifying avenues for further research that should now be undertaken.

### 8.2.1 Unpacking the Education-Pregnancy Nexus

At the outset, this study has contributed to reconceptualising and repositioning in-school pregnancy in Mozambique. Chapter 3 has suggested that mainstream research, both within academia and the policy world, has constructed teenage pregnancy as

problematic on different levels. At the level of the individual, it has been framed within medicalised approaches emphasising the risks connected with having a child too early. Moreover, it has been understood as deviance, hence associated with psychological shortcomings. Contextually, teenage pregnancy is positioned within studies looking at social exclusion in that it may trigger vicious cycles of poverty and deprivation.

A post-modern trend courses through more recent studies, which looks instead at the meaning-making behaviours that individuals engage with in relation to a teenage pregnancy. This approach has rarely been applied to development contexts, where early pregnancy generally raises Malthusian fears of overpopulation and increased poverty, together with risks of HIV infection. Conversely, formal education and training are represented as means to personal development and success, through the acquisition of skills which will lead to formal employment. In this sense, schooling is constructed as an instance of modernity (Castro & Abramovay, 2003), while pregnancy and parenthood are defined negatively, in terms of the opportunities they prevent. In-school pregnancy is thus constructed as a means for the reproduction of tradition in a globalised world where tradition is a synonym for backwardness.

A first contribution of this work is therefore to reposition in-school pregnancy. In order to do so, it has been necessary to first ‘expose and then dissolve’ (Arnfred, 2004b) the different dichotomies at play in the construction of in-school pregnancy as a problem. The analysis, which has incorporated a critical consideration of Decree 39/GM/2003 with data developed through ethnographic observation, interviews and focus groups, suggested that in-school pregnancy may not necessarily trigger vicious cycles of poverty and deprivation. Instead, in-school pregnancy may be considered as a prism through which it is possible to gain some insight into the relationship between subjects and discourses.

Unpacking the dichotomy between modernity and tradition has been particularly fruitful in this study. Much of the data gathered here imply a conceptualisation of the individual deeply rooted in both the Enlightenment and the modernisation theories it inspires. The ‘modern’ subject is both identified by Figure 4 within the left box marked with a ‘+’, and in the difference established with its counterpart. This subject, defined in Chapter 3, is guided by rationality in *his* constant journey towards progress. The italicised *his* is not accidental, as the subject of the Enlightenment is mainly a ‘white, middle-class heterosexual adult male’ (Macleod, 2011, 24). The influence of modernity can also be

gleaned through the insistence on education as a means to individual betterment. This is usually achieved by focusing on the mind, where rationality resides, to the detriment of the body, taken as a site of emotions and thus in need of containment more than expression.

Discourses of modernity and tradition play out in the distinction between the two sites of this study: schools and families, again in prominent positions in the systematic chain represented by Figure 4. Chapter 6 in particular has looked *inside* discursive formations produced and implemented within schools and families in order to expose the merging of different processes of change. This has resulted in the dissolution of the opposition between tradition and modernity in that I have highlighted how different, often contrasting but also concurrent processes of change, interweave within each site. This has supported the claim that the notion of multiple modernities is better suited to illuminate the context of Mozambique in general, and the case of in-school pregnancy in particular.

Findings from this doctoral project further suggest that discourses of childhood and adulthood may play a big part in constructing the dichotomy of pregnancy-education. Traditionally, rites of passage identify changes within individual identities, changes that have an impact on the relation individuals entertain with their communities and networks. Sex and fertility are tightly connected with rites of passage (Groes-Green, 2013) in that menstruation used to coincide with a woman's readiness for marriage and childbearing, and subsequent transition into adulthood. Decisions concerning her present and future would be taken by older generations, once again emphasising seniority as the basis of social hierarchy. Childbearing thus carries a strong symbolic power, in that it potentially reproduces the dominant social order alongside both gender and age.

Enquiring into in-school pregnancy has thus allowed me to explore the connections it raises with discourses of age and life-course, what it means to be a child, what it means to be an adult and how these categories are constructed in opposition to one another. Childhood is constructed as a time for options and possibilities, a time for investments in the making of adult identity. Adulthood is characterised instead by the fixity of a choice that has been taken, and which cannot be undone. A girl that is pregnant while in education 'has shown her path', meaning that she has clarified which identity to embrace and which regulatory framework to abide by. By so doing, in-school

pregnancy becomes a signifier for adulthood in that girls are expected to embrace a specific gender script, that of the stay-at-home mother and, possibly, the wife.

In-school pregnancy occurs in the liminal space between childhood and adulthood, a compressed teenage-hood, or an extended rite of passage in which identity is moulded against the ideal type of the adult. This would allow us to understand transfer to night courses under an entirely different light. Transfer would not be a punishment, nor a way to prevent more pregnancies from happening. Transfer would become part of a more structured mechanism to shape individuals into adults. Yet, by exploring the intersections between different regulatory frameworks and multiple processes of change, I have suggested how limiting it is to rely on an approach that considers heteronormativities as mutually exclusive. If in-school pregnancy identifies a site of liminality, then the context where that scene takes place is a context of permanent liminality (Szakolczai, 2000), as the ideal poles defining the transition are never fully reached or departed from, but constantly renegotiated.

Government, intended in a Foucauldian sense as a combination of ‘institutions, procedures, analyses, reflections, calculations and tactics’ (Foucault, 1991), works from a macro to micro context, ranging from international agendas to local policies and procedures which work through institutions and implementation practices to arrive at individuals and their bodies. In-school pregnancy is thus a very conducive field for the implementation of the concept of bio-power, or the ‘diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations’ (Foucault, 1976, 140). In-school pregnancy is not only the space where the distinction between childhood and adulthood collapses, or where the gendered difference between men and women is reproduced within and beyond biological means, it also becomes the *locus* where the macro and micro converge.

In this sense, the study highlights how institutional policies and practices surrounding in-school pregnancy, rather than in-school pregnancy per se, contribute to the dropout of pregnant schoolgirls. The difficulties entailed by attending night courses, together with the meaning attached to them (with respect to) in marking the distinction between childhood and adulthood, make it hard for pregnant schoolgirls to keep attending. Institutional policies and practices thus reinforce the multiple binary oppositions discussed above, childhood/adulthood, or tradition/modernity. By so doing, they both

assume and reproduce the construction of these discourses and their dichotomous framing.

This, combined with the surveillance practices discussed in Chapter 5, have prompted me to rely on the concept of throw-out as developed by Luker (1996). I find that this usage adds a dimension of violence often left out by the more neutral 'push factors'. 'Throw-out' thus conveys the strength and impact that institutional practices have on individual identity, forcing girls out of childhood and leaving them to deal with what being an adult actually means to them. This position resonates with Chilisa (2002) in recognising how in-school pregnancy policies may symbolise subtle forms of violence against those affected (21-22).

In this context, resistance and dissidence are not only meant to destabilise the coherence of established discourses, but are also intrinsic elements of the functioning of power (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). It is this internal *disorder* that lies at the root of politics, and which cannot but encourage the co-existence of 'changing interests and partial identities' (Macleod & Durrheim, 2002, 56). This second aspect of discourses raises the inextricability of discourses and the subject, and requires further consideration of the ways in which subjects appropriate such discourses rendering themselves intelligible.

Both methodologically and theoretically, I have striven to be sensitive to local meanings and cultures. This has been made possible through an extended period of fieldwork, and openness to local conceptualisations and perceptions, achieved through academic engagement and participation in the social lives of research participants. The ethnographic data stemming out of this exposure have been key in adequately framing the sites of this study, as is the case of families. Gaining understandings of the contingency of the term 'family member' amongst my group of participants has allowed me to glean a sense of the fluidity of this institution. This has further enabled me to move away from the Western notion of the nuclear family, which seems nonetheless to inform much of the scholarship in this field.

The use of Mozambican and other African scholarship has been integrated with Western constructs with the aim of pushing the boundaries of both, and opposing the existence of yet another binary opposition between Western and African scholarship. This study has thus identified some synergies that illuminate the case of in-school pregnancy, and use them to develop a theory of the subject that is sensitive both to local history and

pervasive processes of change that can be framed within theories of multiple modernities.

The concept of multiple modernities pluralises previous theories of modernity and is particularly apt for illuminating postcolonial contexts where the divide between tradition and modernity has been overcome (Lee, 2006). As argued in Chapter 2, Mozambique presents a fragmented history, whereby the coexistence of multiple normative frameworks has characterised the country for the last centuries. Portuguese colonisers, modernising attempts carried out after Independence and lately, development agendas, have all contributed to fostering one or more views over what is deemed appropriate in terms of individual identity. Yet, a consideration of this plurality is still absent as most literature focuses on either instances of tradition or modernity.

It is only recently that scholars such as Passador (2008, 2009) and Aboim (2009) have started to consider the intersections between tradition and modernity. Yet, it is just with Osório & Cruz e Silva (2008) that a connection is established between tradition and modernity on the one hand, and individual identities on the other. At the same time, what is missing from their analysis, and what this study proposes instead, is an integrated theory of the subject which is both constituted and constituting of discursive formations through her own identity performances. It is in this sense that in-school pregnancy becomes a prism, in that it allows us to consider the multi-layered and diffracted connections between individuals and discourses.

By exposing the dichotomies invoked in its construction as a social problem, this study has rendered visible the itineraries individuals create by crossing boundaries between normative frameworks. In a more fine-spun way, it has emphasised how different discourses are invoked in the performance of individual identities, claiming for example that some may create fiction in that they are developed within different regulatory frameworks. Adopting the stance of multiple modernities permits us to render these frictions visible and intelligible, which previous accounts have struggled to do.

Moreover, the analysis has suggested that considering the performativity of individual identity also enables us to explore how individual performances may create spaces for the development of new discourses, or push the boundaries of existing ones. In-school pregnancy can, by all means, be seen as a site for Butlerian resignification. By repeating the scene, but invoking different normativities, individuals can enact and reanimate

refracted processes. In this way in-school pregnancy does not only carry the meanings with which it is constructed through decree 39/GM/2003, neither does it necessarily trigger the regulation it is formally subjected to within the school or family. The meanings attached to in-school pregnancy are shifting, together with what is perceived to be ‘modern’ or ‘traditional’.

These shifts, I contend in this thesis, can be connected to the interstices between heteronormativities, where agency plays out. The theorisation of agency this study puts forth is tightly interwoven within individuals’ discursive performatives discussed above. In this context of permanent liminality (Szakolczai, 2000) agency extends beyond the individual. This study thus contributes to recent postmodern conceptualisations of agency as a relational construct (Kennelly, 2009; Lovell, 2003). Yet, it does so by weaving them within and between an emphasis on local and historical traits, such as that of kinship.

As the analysis has departed from the purely textual exploration of decree 39/GM/2003, this study has clear policy implications, which will be discussed below.

### 8.2.2 Policy Implications

This study carries out a thorough analysis of the current policy developed in order to tackle the occurrence of in-school pregnancy in Mozambique. This means that its insight would be useful in refining current overarching strategies. For instance this thesis argues that Decree 39/GM/2003 may have perverse effects in that it does little to provide an avenue for pregnant girls to remain in education. A possible way to limit such unwarranted effects is to consider processes alongside goals and engage with local communities in order to operationalise these through context-sensitive policies. Careful monitoring, and inclusion of *all* stakeholders – in this case, students and pregnant schoolgirls themselves – would counterbalance the impact of potential perverse effects, and contribute effectively to bridging the gender gap in education.

It seems that Decree 39/GM/2003 may be counterproductive on yet another level. By punishing pregnancy, it reinforces the dichotomous relation it entails with education, contributing to framing pregnancy as a rite of passage. In this thesis I maintain that individuals navigate different normative frameworks with a certain degree of fluidity, which is at odds with the requirements of the school system.



By including in this study a school which functioned more independently from MINED – the District Religious School – I have been pondering what a more flexible system might actually look like. For example, modular courses, developed in order to account for seasonality, could offer more chances for the inclusion of some young people maintaining a number of different identities. Girls who become pregnant, for instance, are not necessarily excluded but are able to interrupt their studies as they deem appropriate and resume at a later stage. This modular structure could be considered by MINED as one strategy to address issues of retention, not only of young mothers, but also more generally of young people.

Lastly, and more broadly, the considerations made here in relation to identity construction could contribute to current development agendas by considering the dangers of invoking a modern subject. The limitations of doing so entail the risk of obscuring key social processes such as the concurrent embracing of different regulatory structures, thereby producing ineffective development recommendations.

### 8.2.3 Thesis as a Personal Journey

This research has primarily aimed at elaborating the nexus pregnancy/education. In the process, its personal implications have become evident. At the outset, this study challenged my own assumptions about why young people have a child while they are still in education and how they cope with this new and demanding situation. Enthused by mainly Western analysis of teenage pregnancy and psycho-social disadvantage, I started off with grand plans of contributing to lifting girls out of victimhood. Pregnancy at a young age, the burden of responsibilities it comes with, all seemed to me to constrain girls so that they would only ever become docile wives and mothers, stripped of any aspirations to reach their ‘potential’.

Being in the field, spending time with young people, their families, and in their schools, all contributed to a change in my perspective. I no longer approach the latest report on the risks entailed by teenage pregnancy with apprehension or automatically consider all girls to be victims (of their partners, of institutions, of their families or cultural normative frameworks). So doing would imply they do not have agency, which would translate my analysis into a moral treatise. Rather this study has allowed me to consider the ways in which young people construct their own narratives, and strive to create an identity for themselves.

Reading reports on teenage pregnancy in developing countries has now become a reflection of my own Western consciousness as much as anything else. I find myself asking, how is it that there is little, or even no attempt at engaging with local meanings? How is it that *modern* and *traditional* are still taken as the two terms of a dichotomy? What now stands out for me from my study is just how different waves (and indeed wavelets) actually coexist and interweave with one another. Indeed, they do this, as dynamics of the very same processes through which young people embrace different – and often contrasting – sets of norms.

On a separate plane, this thesis has become a signifier of my own journey into academia. Through this work, as part of countless discussions with doctoral colleagues and faculty alike, I have learnt what it means to analyse and to theorise. Methodologically, it represents my journey from a modern, developmental standpoint, to a more reflexive position. I cannot identify myself wholly with modern ideals of progress and individual betterment, but I feel my association with what is *post*-modern entails a constant (re)positioning. I feel that this study has not defined the end of a phase – the doctorate – but more the beginning of a journey whose destination and itinerary are not – and cannot yet – be known.

Lastly, what started off as a research topic became embodied in the process, when I became pregnant myself in the midst of my fieldwork. This had – and still has – profound implications<sup>51</sup>, as I have literally become one of my research participants – although not subject to quite the same regulatory frameworks! Although not in secondary school, but higher education, I still had my child whilst studying. This made me appreciate the labour of study and child-rearing, and allowed me to identify strongly with the narratives the young women I interviewed. Afânia, quoted at the beginning of this concluding chapter, very passionately claims that there is no difference between pregnant schoolgirls and ‘us’, and I feel my doctoral journey ultimately led me to embody this wholeheartedly.

#### 8.2.4 Further Research

As with any other research, completing one piece already opens up new spaces for further investigations. A first direction for any further analysis could be more strictly

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<sup>51</sup> Refer to Chapter 4 for a methodological consideration.

related to the space of the classroom. I am interested to ask, for example, with all the pregnancies that end in a school dropout, how many go yet unnoticed and cause no disruptions at an educational level? How do girls who belong to such a group as this deal with their pregnancy on the one hand, and with the school requirements on the other? Such a piece of research would involve intensive class observations and individual and group discussions with both girls and their classmates in a way that would allow for a thorough consideration of the interactive dimension of the classroom.

A second area of research could proceed to include men's perspectives. As this study has suggested: who are the men who get girls pregnant? How do they perceive the *choice* they have to remain or leave? How do they elaborate on this choice they seem to make? These perspectives were touched upon only briefly in this study, and would provide material for further fruitful insights.

Pregnancy has been considered here in close relation to the family. A question that could be elaborated here is very much connected to the construction of the family in Mozambique. What counts as a family? In what ways does a pregnancy impact on existing family networks, in what ways does it create new connections? Especially in the context of this diverse country, the literature has identified an overreliance on Western concepts, specifically in relation to the nuclear family. A study on pregnancy could easily expand to provide understandings of different family formations, for example, drawing on new non-Western constructs.

Looking to the future in this way reminds me of the complexities of parting however imagined. I recognise the contingency of the arguments I have discussed, especially as they become new arguments and new questions.

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## Appendix 1. Decree 39/GM/2003



REPÚBLICA DE MOÇAMBIQUE

**MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO**  
GABINETE DO MINISTRO**DESPACHO Nº. 39/GM/2003**

A edificação de uma sociedade de justiça social, na defesa e preservação de igualdades de direitos para todos cidadãos em geral, passa, necessariamente, por uma política de educação equilibrada, valorizando a formação dos cidadãos, com sólida preparação científica, técnica, cultural e física e uma elevada educação moral, cívica e patriótica, que constituem grandes alicerces dos objectivos prosseguidos pelo Sistema Nacional de Educação (SNE).

Para a concretização de tais objectivos, exige-se, a criação de mecanismos internos no sector da Educação, para tornar eficaz o cumprimento da política de educação para todos, com o envolvimento, não só, do pessoal ligado ao sector, como de toda sociedade civil.

O elevado índice de desperdício escolar, que se verifica, pelo facto das alunas se apresentarem grávidas, no decurso do ano lectivo e, por outro lado, por resultar, fundamentalmente, dos próprios docentes, que, ultrapassando a natureza da sua relação profissional para com as mesmas, em detrimento da sua função, criam mau ambiente na escola;

Há por isso, toda a necessidade de adopção de medidas de prevenção e repreensão deste fenómeno.

Assim sendo, à luz da alínea d) do artigo 3 da Lei nº. 6/92, de 06 de Maio, do Sistema Nacional de Educação e de harmonia com o disposto no nº. 7 do artigo 3, do Decreto Presidencial nº. 16/2000, de 03 de Outubro, decido, com efeitos imediatos:

1. São suspensos dos serviços e vencimentos e, constituídos infractores, em processo disciplinar, os docentes e outros trabalhadores da Educação, ligados às escolas, que engravidem alunas afectas a essa mesma escola, assim como os que assediam sexualmente estudantes.
2. É vedada a frequência para o curso diurno, nos níveis elementar, básico e médio do SNE; às alunas que se encontrem em estado de gravidez, bem como os respectivos autores, caso sejam alunos da mesma escola.
3. Sempre que se justificar, será autorizada a frequência às aulas das alunas grávidas, por decisão do Conselho da Escola, tratando-se de escolas que não possuem o curso nocturno.

4. As dúvidas decorrentes da interpretação e aplicação do presente despacho, serão sanadas sob forma de despacho do Ministro da Educação.

Maputo, aos 05 de Dezembro de 2003

  
**ALCIDO EDUARDO NGUENHA**  
**MINISTRO DA EDUCAÇÃO**

The following is a literal translation of the official text. The translation was done while in Mozambique together with Mozambican Educators (one MINED official and a local NGO worker who liaised with the MINED).

*MINISTRY OF EDUCATION - Minister's Office - DECREE N° 39/GM/2003*

*The construction of a socially just society, in the defense and preservation of equalities and rights of all citizens necessarily implies a balanced education policy, which values the education of its citizens and their robust scientific, technical, cultural and physical preparation. On top of that, their moral and civic education should be fostered, as these form part of the objectives of the National Education System.*

*In order to realise such objectives, it is necessary to create mechanisms internal to the education sector. These mechanisms and procedures will contribute to rendering the education system efficient for all, not only for staff, but civil society at large.*

*The high rate of school dropout is due to schoolgirls presenting themselves pregnant during the schoolyear. Those pregnancies are fundamentally the outcome of the illicit development of an unprofessional relationship between male teachers and schoolgirls. Such situations are detrimental to the public and educative role of schools, and contribute to the creation of a negative environment.*

*As a consequence, there is the need to adopt means of prevention and reprehension of such events, as specified by the following actions, to be taken with immediate effect:*

*In relation to point d) of the article 3, law 6/92 of the National Education System, effective as of the 6<sup>th</sup> May;*

*In accordance with decree 7 of article 3 of Presidential Decree 16/2000, effective as of the 3<sup>rd</sup> October;*

***IT IS DECIDED WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT THAT***

1. *Teachers and other school workers who get a schoolgirl pregnant in their same school or who sexually assault students are suspended from their jobs and are to be treated as public offenders;*
2. *Pregnant schoolgirls and their partners, where identified and attending the same school, are forbidden from day school and are requested to transfer to night courses;*
3. *If the school does not have a night course for the specific grade, the school council is authorised to consider pregnant girls' permanence in their day class;*
4. *Any doubts relative to the interpretation and application of this document should be addressed in consultancy with the Ministry of Education.*

The education officers contributing to the translation suggested ways to convey the common usage of the literal phrasing. These suggestions included defining in-school pregnancies as 'unwanted' and 'unplanned' *in lieu* of the use of the passive form in Portuguese. These are further discussed in Section 5.2.1.

*Maputo, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2003*



## Appendix 2. Interview Prompts - MINED Officials

My name is Francesca and I am a university student in London, England. I am 30 and I am Italian.

- **Introduction of research**

I am exploring teenage pregnancy and its connections with schooling. In order to do this, I am interviewing a number of people. These will be mainly young people, but also headteachers and other teachers like yourself who work in schools and often deal with pregnant schoolgirls. I am carrying out this research as part of my doctorate back in England. I am interested in hearing about your experiences of teaching and working closely with young people. I believe that talking about and giving visibility to perspectives of pregnancy in school could help other young people in dealing with both attending school and raising children. For this reason I will strive to make the results of this study available to NGOs working with issues related to education and gender imbalances, schools, and the government. However, I cannot guarantee that this will have the desired impact.

- **Informed consent**

Should you agree to take part in this study, you should be assured that your identity will not be revealed. What you will share with me will remain anonymous unless you ask me to make it public. Also, your consent to participate in this study can be withdrawn at any time, should you wish to interrupt or end our conversation without giving a reason. You can also decide not to talk about specific aspects of your life and work and focus on others. Lastly, you are welcome to ask me questions throughout the session, about this study or my own experiences. I will take notes while we talk, and maybe refer back to them to ask you further questions, or to expand on particular aspects.

- **Interview prompts/questions**

- Institutional: What is your role in your organisation? If not directly working for the MINED, what is the relationship between your institution and the MINED? How is this relation formalised (procedures, reports, working partnerships and the like)?

- Education: what is the role of education in Mozambique? How is it to be achieved? What are the main difficulties/obstacles the country is facing now, in your opinion?
- Pregnancy: Can you talk a little about the position of the MINED in regards to in-school pregnancies? What does your institution do in order to achieve its aims in relation to in-school pregnancy? If you were to position decree 39/GM/2003 in perspective, what is there before it? What do you envisage coming up next? Why do you think girls get pregnant while they are still enrolled in school? In other words, what are the causes of in-school pregnancy?
- Men: Who are the men who get schoolgirls pregnant? What is the aim of the policy in targeting them? Can you elaborate on the case of schoolteachers getting schoolgirls pregnant?

Encourage interviewee to add anything that has not been discussed, or to ask questions back.

## Appendix 3. Interview Prompts - School Staff

- **Greetings.**

My name is Francesca and I am a university student in London, England. I am 30 and I am Italian.

- **Introduction of research.**

I am exploring teenage pregnancy and its connections with schooling. In order to do this, I am interviewing a number of people. These will be mainly young people, but also headteachers and other teachers like yourself who work in schools and often deal with pregnant schoolgirls. I am carrying out this research as part of my doctorate back in England. I am interested in hearing about your experiences of teaching and working closely with young people. I believe that talking about and giving visibility to perspectives of pregnancy in school could help other young people in dealing with both attending school and raising children. For this reason I will strive to make the results of this study available to NGOs working with issues related to education and gender imbalances, schools, and the government. However, I cannot guarantee that this will have the desired impact.

- **Informed consent.**

Should you agree to take part in this study, you should be assured that your identity will not be revealed. What you will share with me will remain anonymous unless you ask me to make it public. Also, your consent to participate in this study can be withdrawn at any time, should you wish to interrupt or end our conversation without giving a reason. You can also decide not to talk about specific aspects of your life and work and focus on others. Lastly, you are welcome to ask me questions throughout the session, about this study or my own experiences. I will take notes while we talk, and maybe refer back to them to ask you further questions, or to expand on particular aspects.

- **Interview prompts/questions**

The aim of interviewing teachers is to explore how in-school pregnancies are addressed within the school contexts. Also, the questions will try to discuss ministerial decree 39/GM/2003 and its implementation.

- Professional history: When did you become a teacher? Why did you decide you wanted to become a teacher? What motivates you in your work? Which age group do you teach? Which subject(s)?
- Contacts with pregnant schoolgirls: Do you have, or have you had at any point in your career, any pregnant girls in your class/es? If so, would you be able to give me an approximate number? How would you describe your experience with pregnant girls in school? What do you think of girls that become pregnant in school? Are there specific difficulties in teaching pregnant schoolgirls? How would you describe the attitude of the rest of the class towards any pregnant girl? Do you have experience of girls trying to hide their pregnancy while in school? How do you find out if a girl is pregnant? How do you address this?
- Ministerial decree: Are you aware of the ministerial decree 39/GM/2003? Is it enforced in this school? In your experience, what are the consequences of its enforcement? Is there any specific procedure your school has put in place for the implementation of decree 39/GM/2003 (Committee or the like)? What do you think of the decree? What would be, in your opinion, the best way to deal with in-school pregnancies?

#### **Head-teacher and Directors of Pedagogy only**

- Procedures and records: Do you have school records stating the numbers of girls who get pregnant in school? Do you work in connection with the MINED? How does that work?
- School-staff: What is the gender balance within staff: how many male teachers? How many female teachers? How can you explain the situation (in the case of a strong gender disparity)?

## Appendix 4. Interview Prompts - Young People

- **Greetings.**

My name is Francesca and I am a university student in London, England. I am 30 and I am Italian.

- **Introduction of research.**

I am exploring teenage pregnancy and its connections with schooling. In order to do this, I am interviewing a number of people. These are mainly young people like yourself, but also headteachers and other teachers from schools. I am carrying out this research as part of my doctorate back in England. I am interested in hearing about your experiences connected to having a child while studying at school. I believe talking about and giving visibility to stories like yours could help other young people dealing with both attending school and raising children. For this reason I will strive to make the results of this study available to NGOs working with issues related to education and gender imbalances, schools, and the government. However, I cannot guarantee that this will have the desired impact.

- **Informed consent.**

Should you agree to take part in this study, you should be assured that your identity will not be revealed. What you will share with me will remain anonymous unless you ask me to make it public. Also, your consent to participate in this study can be withdrawn at any time, should you wish to interrupt or end our conversation without giving a reason. You can also decide not to talk about specific aspects of your life and focus on others. Lastly, you are welcome to ask me questions throughout the session, about this study or my own experiences. I will take notes while we talk, and maybe refer back to them to ask you further questions, or to expand on particular aspects.

- **Interview prompts/questions**

The interviews will encourage participants to explore pregnancy and parenthood in relation to other life events, and specifically in connection to school attendance.

- Family history: Where do you come from? Where did you grow up? With whom? How would you describe your life back then? With whom do you live now?

This conversation aims at exploring intergenerational relations and the contexts in which interviewees grew up to put their pregnancies in relation to such contexts.

- Social environment: Who is the person you rely upon the most? Who would you approach if you were in need of advice/support? Who do you spend most of your time with? Friends?

This section furthers interviewees' relations beyond family members.

Education and professional history: Are you currently in education or working? If you work, what do you do? When did you stop going to school? Why? How would you describe your time in school? Did you like school? What did you do in school? What did you expect to get out of it? What do you think schools should aim to, but fail to achieve? If you do not have a job, why? Would you like to be employed? This section explores interviewees' perceptions of the school environment and of the job market.

- Relationship history: How do boys and girls relate to each other in school? When did you start dating? What would you do when out on a date? How do you remember your boyfriends/girlfriends? Are you in a relationship now? Are you married? If so, how did it happen? Would you like to talk a bit about it? Are you still together with the father of your child? If with a new partner, how does he/she relate to children of previous relationships?

This section aims at finding out more about gender relations

- Childbirth history: Do you have any children? Were you expected to become a mother/father? Did you expect/want to become a mother/father? Is this something you talked over with friends?
  - IF SO: would you like to tell me more about it? I.e. Reactions when you found out, Reactions of your partner/relatives/friends/community. Were you in school when you got pregnant/when your partner got pregnant? Did you drop out as a consequence? Would you like to tell me more about that time of your life? Did you want to have a baby?
  - IF NOT: Are you sexually active? Are you using any contraception? Are you in a relationship? Have you talked about having babies with your partner? What do you think about those who have babies while in school?

This section aims at finding out about parenthood and parenthood aspirations and their positioning within existing relations.

- **Pregnancy and schooling:** Did your/your partner's pregnancy have an impact on your school routine? Who knew about your/your partner's pregnancy in school? If they knew, how did they find out? Did you/your partner try to hide the pregnancy? How did your classmates react to your/your partner's pregnancy? Your teachers? Introduce the decree 39/GM/2003 on in-school pregnancy and ask for comments.
- **After childbirth:** Did things changed after you had your baby? How about your daily routines? Do you still spend time with the same friends?

### **Boys only**

- Did you want to become a father? How was your reaction when you knew your partner was pregnant? Did you accept responsibility for the pregnancy? How do you support for your partner and child? What was/is the role of your family in dealing with the pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing?

Encourage interviewee to add anything that has not been discussed, or to ask questions back.

## Appendix 5. Interview Prompts - Older People

- **Greetings.**

My name is Francesca and I am a university student in London, England. I am 30 and I am Italian.

- **Introduction of research.**

I am exploring teenage pregnancy and its connections with schooling. In order to do this, I am interviewing a number of people. These are mainly young people, but also their family members and headteachers and other teachers from schools. I am carrying out this research as part of my doctorate back in England. I am interested in hearing about your experiences as your child had/is having a child while she/he was/is studying at school. I believe talking about and giving visibility to stories like yours could help other young people dealing with both attending school and raising children. For this reason I will strive to make the results of this study available to NGOs working with issues related to education and gender imbalances, schools, and the government. However, I cannot guarantee that this will have the desired impact.

- **Informed consent.**

Should you agree to take part in this study, you should be assured that your identity will not be revealed. What you will share with me will remain anonymous unless you ask me to make it public. Also, your consent to participate in this study can be withdrawn at any time, should you wish to interrupt or end our conversation without giving a reason. You can also decide not to talk about specific aspects of your life and focus on others. Lastly, you are welcome to ask me questions throughout the session, about this study or my own experiences. I will take notes while we talk, and maybe refer back to them to ask you further questions, or to expand on particular aspects.

- **Interview prompts/questions**

The interviews will encourage participants to explore pregnancy and parenthood in relation to other life events, and specifically in connection to school attendance.

- Family history: Where do you come from? Where did you grow up? With whom? How would you describe your life back then? With whom do you live now?



- In-school pregnancy: Did you have direct experience of an in-school pregnancy (your daughter or son)? Can you tell me a bit more of what happened? How did you react? What course of action did you go for? What were the main problems/obstacles you had to solve? How did you negotiate through them? What do you think could make things better for girls/boys who have a child while they are registered at school? What do you think of girls who get pregnant while they are registered at school?
- Change and continuity: Did you ever get married? If so, how did that happen? How do young boys and girls relate to each other? How was it when you were young? Would you say something has changed? If so, what? How would you describe a good Mozambican woman or man? Have the roles changed with time?
- Success: what is or should be the role of education, in your opinion? How does education contribute to make an individual successful? Is education connected to employment? How would you define success?

Encourage interviewee to add anything that has not been discussed, or to ask questions back.

## Appendix 6. Focus Group Discussion Guide

My name is Francesca and I am a university student in London, England. I am 30 and I am Italian.

- **Introduction of research**

I am exploring teenage pregnancy and its connections with schooling. In order to do this, I am interviewing a number of people. These are mainly young people, but also their family members, headteachers and other teachers. I am carrying out this research as part of my doctorate back in England. I am interested in discussing aspects of your life like going to school, spending time with friends, having partners, getting pregnant and having children.

- **Informed consent**

Should you agree to take part in this study, you should be assured that your identity will not be revealed. What you will share with me will remain anonymous unless you ask me to make it public. Also, your consent to participate in this study can be withdrawn at any time, should you wish to interrupt or end our conversation without giving a reason. You can also decide not to talk about specific aspects of your life and work and focus on others. Lastly, you are welcome to ask me questions throughout the session, about this study or my own experiences. I will take notes while we talk, and maybe refer back to them to ask you further questions, or to expand on particular aspects.

### **Boys only**

- Couple: Importance of having relationships and the role of trust
- Family: Role of the family while children are growing up, family as an ideal for one's future
- Peers: Types of relationships
- Feelings towards partner's pregnancy: Reasons for wanting a pregnancy, accepting or failing to accept responsibility, role of families
- School: What is the role of education? Why is in-school pregnancy problematic? What obstacles does a pregnancy pose to teaching and learning?

- Financial situation: How much does it impact on the decision to accept or not a pregnancy?
- Girls: Who are the girls who get pregnant?

### **Girls only**

- Couple: Importance of having relationships and the role of trust
- Family: Role of the family while children are growing up, family as an ideal for one's future
- Peers: Types of relationships
- Feelings towards pregnancy: Reasons for wanting a pregnancy, role of families
- School: What is the role of education? Why is in-school pregnancy problematic? What obstacles does a pregnancy pose to teaching and learning?
- Financial situation: How much does it impact on the types of relationship one has? Does it impact on the resolution to try and get pregnant?
- Boys/men: Who are those that get schoolgirls pregnant?

### **Mixed gender**

- Couple: Importance of having relationships and the role of trust
- Family: Role of the family while children are growing up, family as an ideal for one's future
- Peers: Types of relationships
- School: What is the role of education? Why is in-school pregnancy problematic? What obstacles does a pregnancy pose to teaching and learning?
- Financial situation: How much does it impact on the decision to accept or not a pregnancy?

Mixed gender focus groups were a good means for the discussion of the interactions between different actors (young people, school staff, family members), and were often spaces where boys and girls would confront their perceptions on pregnancy and relationships.



## Appendix 7. Fieldnotes Excerpt

9<sup>th</sup> April 2011

Paulo, one of the boys contributing to my focus group from the District School, invited me to an *apresentação*. This is a ceremony corresponding to the first step of the Mozambican wedding. Literally *apresentação* means presentation/introduction, and concerns the introduction of the members of two different family groups, which are going to be united through a wedding. Traditionally, this is how things went: once families had decided upon a marital union, they would meet together with the bride and groom and share a meal. Further to that, a second meeting would be arranged, which always included a meal. This would be the *lobolo*, or the moment in which the two families agree on a certain bride price. The third – and last – step of the traditional wedding is the wedding ceremony itself, which does not differ from the previous two steps, if not in its meaning. If the *apresentação* is a shared meal with the goal of introducing the two families to one another, the *lobolo* a shared meal with the aim of agreeing on a bride price, then the wedding is once again a shared meal, but with the aim of turning two individuals into a family unity.

Traditionally, bride and groom would move in together after this last step. However, the timing of such steps has been heavily impacted upon by changes at the social level. For instance, each of these three separate steps involves considerable cost – for example the cost of organising a buffet lunch for a group in the region of 50 people (families tend to be quite extended in Mozambique, and these occasions are the ones where you are supposed to invited just about everybody). This alone is enough to dissuade the most traditional individuals from following the rules strictly.

Another reason for changing the order of these steps is out-of-wedlock pregnancy. For instance this *apresentação* I am going to today concerns two school-children of 16 and 18 who decided to bring their ‘unruled’ behaviours within the traditionally accepted framework. Paulo’s brother got his girlfriend pregnant, and they decided to make it public, and initiate their wedding ceremony. However, they are adapting it to their situation. The bride is already pregnant for instance, and as a consequence, she is moving in with the groom and his family by the end of the *apresentação* itself. So even if traditional ceremonies and rules are followed, there is a certain amount of contingency planning that needs be accounted for.

As I did not want to show up with empty hands, I asked a friend to enquire with her Mozambican colleagues at work, and she suggested I should ask Paulo directly, as it would be weird to show up with something that had no meaning for them, or no use. So Paulo told me they would like a *bolo*, a cake, because they were running short of dessert. And so I did. I could not bake my own, as the oven at our place is not working, but went to a nice Italian place and ordered one.

I got there around 2.30pm and the party had already gathered, although they had not started eating yet. Paulo was busy with the organisation, so he could not spend too much time with me, which was even more interesting, as I was left with his grandmother – who spoke little Portuguese – and a few other older guests. At some point he insisted that I took my place at the high table, which is where bride and groom and witnesses were sitting! I kindly turned the offer down, as I would have felt really out of place. Apparently they really had saved that spot for me, as nobody else took that place throughout the ceremony.

After a while, while I was trying to chatter with Paulo's grandmother, Paulo's uncle gave a brief speech, just to welcome the guests and ask them to help themselves at the buffet. He gave a speech in lieu of Paulo's father, who is clearly not part of the family. After that everybody jumped up and approached the big table in the middle of the courtyard, to fill in their plates before going back to peripheral seats.

I did not get a lot of food, because I had eaten shortly before going there – which is just the perfect excuse! Because I was pregnant, I tried to avoid eating at places where I know hygiene levels may be poor. However, I did not want to come across as rude, so I never said no to grilled chicken or fries and tried to avoid more risky salads and water instead.

I had a weird conversation with Paulo's grandmother, aided by some other guests with translation. I realised that being invited by Paulo to the *apresentação* had not been greeted without some confusion. His grandmother, maybe in virtue of her age, which gave her the power to just 'say it out loud' where others may restrain, asked me straight 'is Paulo the father?' in relation to my bump. I literally froze, as her question came, to me, totally out of the blue. Then I realized its logic, which was just a different logic from mine. There I was, invited to a family gathering, and asked to sit at high table when I was not part of the family – 'yet'. There I was, pregnant, at a ceremony that had

been triggered by another pregnancy. Well, once I started considering these aspects, it was natural that she – and many others surely – had wondered, whether my pregnancy belonged to the one person that had invited me there!

This is very interesting, as I realised how strong a pregnancy is in triggering family relations, and initiating new ties. Exactly because of the high costs people incur in when organising a wedding, they usually do not really do it, if they are not ‘forced’. And pregnancy surely acts as an incentive to enforce such costs!

Anyway, I blushed, and tried my way out of the embarrassing situation, as the grandmother was subtly but surely aiming to some sort of a confession out of me. I explained that no, Paulo was not the father of my baby, that my partner was British and living in England at the moment, and that I would rejoin him as soon as my fieldwork was over. I am not sure she believed that, as she gave me an understanding look...

The meal was good and I chattered a bit with the other guests as well, until when the real introductory moment came. Paulo’s uncle, who happened to be the uncle of the groom as well, welcomed the guests at his house. His speech was directed towards the in-laws, as he introduced each member of his own family in relation to the new family: ‘So this woman sitting here is your son-in-law’s mother. These two girls are your son-in-law’s sisters’ and so forth. This part of the ceremony, which seemed to be the main one, the real introduction, lasted very little time, and the speech was over as soon as the list of family members was exhausted.

Shortly after the speech, the in-laws left the premises. Quietly initially, but slowly increasing their tone of voice, the women started to sing beforemaking their way towards the exit. The men followed and the crowd quickly vanished from the premises. The bride would be living with the groom from now onwards, even though their wedding is not formally completed.

After a while, I also made my way to the car and back home, without refraining from giving lifts to those that came by public transport and live in different parts of town... as usual!

## Appendix 8. List of Key Themes

1. Family structure and family dynamics
2. Shame
3. Sex and the body
4. Abortion
5. Pregnancy, contraception and sexual health information
6. Couple's relationship
  - a. Condoms as a substitute for trust
  - b. Multiple Concurrent Partnership (MCP)
  - c. Transactional/intergenerational relationships
7. Boys' perspectives
8. School
  - a. Drop-out
  - b. Thrown-out
  - c. Night courses
  - d. Corruption
  - e. Teacher/pupil relationships
9. Decree 39/GM/2003
10. Pregnancy/Parenthood vs Education
  - a. Families and schooling
  - b. Difficulties pregnant girls face in school/pregnancy as disease
  - c. Hidden pregnancy
  - d. Contagion/influence
11. Tradition Vs Modernity
  - a. Rites of passage
  - b. Gender roles
12. Pregnancy Vs Childlessness
13. Relationship with peers
14. Discrimination
15. Childrearing
16. Finances
  - a. Motherhood as a livelihood
17. Wishes/Desires



## Appendix 9. Introductory Letter



**UNIVERSIDADE EDUARDO MONDLANE**  
***Faculdade de Letras e Ciências Sociais***  
**DEPARTAMENTO DE ARQUEOLOGIA E ANTROPOLOGIA**

Visto  
 Direção de  
 e Dpt  
 da DPE  
 18/10/10

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**PARA:** Ministério da Educação

**De:** Chefe do Departamento de Arqueologia e Antropologia

**Data:** 07 de Outubro de 2010

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**CREDENCIAL**

Segue devidamente autorizada para se apresentar nesse Ministério, **Francisca Salvi**, actualmente inscrita no programa de pós- graduação para a obtenção do grau de PhD, no Institute of Education, University of London.

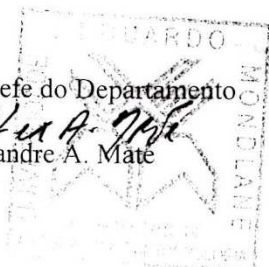
Francisca Salvi pretende em Moçambique, levar a cabo uma pesquisa sobre problemas de gravidez entre as raparigas frequentando a escola. Com efeito, ela deverá realizar entrevistas junto das instituições do Estado, escolas e com jovens.

A pesquisa realizar-se-á em colaboração com o Departamento de Arqueologia e Antropologia da Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, pelo que solicitamos o vosso apoio no sentido de se levar a termo o estudo pretendido.

Saudações Académicas

O Chefe do Departamento

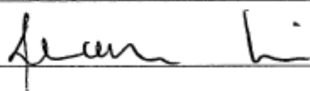
*Alexandre A. Mate*  
 Alexandre A. Mate



*Apresentar-se nesta  
 instituição no dia  
 06/10/10  
 Helando Filio Regado*

## Appendix 10. Ethical Approval

### 4. Declaration

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the course of this project			
Signed		Date	18/08/10

### School Use

Date considered:

Approved and reported to FREC ☒

Referred back to applicant and supervisor ☐

Referred on to FREC ☐

Signature of Supervisor:  .....

Signature of Advisory committee member: .....

### FREC use

Date considered:.....

FREC reference:.....

Approved and filed ☐

Referred back to applicant ☐

Referred to RGEC ☐

Signature of Chair of FREC:.....

## Appendix 11. List of Interviewees

### Ministry of Education (MINED)

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Paulo	MINED
Anais	MINED
Emilia	DECM
Manuel	DECM
Alice	Serviços Distrituais (semi-rural)
Rosa	Serviços Distrituais (semi-rural)
Luis	Serviços Distrituais (distrito I)
Nelia	Serviços Distrituais (Distrito II)
Filomena	International Donor
Igor	International Donor

### School Teachers and Headteachers

Julia	District School
Liliana	District School
Rosalina	District School
Nando	District School
Cassimo	District School
Celso	District School

Francisco	District School
Laura	District School
Estevao	District School
Anselmo	District School
JL	District Religious
Antonia	Central School
Bemvindo	Central School
Clara	Central School
Stelio	Central School
José	Central School
Fernando	Neighbourhood School
Mario	Neighbourhood School
Josia	Neighbourhood School
Sabine	Neighbourhood School

### Young Women

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>children</b>	<b>Live with</b>
Lucia	18	District School	1	Family
Ruth	16	District School	1	Family
Melina	20	Religious District	1	Family

Clio	18	Religious District	1	Family
Sofia	17	Central	1	Partner's family
Herminia	18	Central	1	Family
Celeste	20	Central	1	Family
Alzira	16	Central	1	Family
Sengulane	19	Central	1	Family
Delfina	17	Central	Pregnant	Family
Zara	19	Central	1	Family
Ermelinda	25	Central	1	Family
Ersilia	20	Neighbourhood	2	Family
Amelia	18	Neighbourhood	1 and pregnant	Family
Aissa	19	Neighbourhood	2	Partner and family
Claudia	27	Neighbourhood	1	Family
Catarina	16	Neighbourhood	1	Family
Cristina	18	Neighbourhood	1	Family
Katya	24	Neighbourhood	1	Family
Lucinda	17	Neighbourhood	Pregnant	Family
Zelia	21	Out of school	0 [miscarried]	Family
Lydia	16	Out of school	1 and pregnant	Family

Leticia	19	Out of school	1	Son
Carla	24	Out of School	3	3 children
Concepção	28	Employed	2	Family

#### Young Men

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Acceptance of Pregnancy</b>
Alfredo	Student	In doubt
Idini	Employed	Yes
João	Employed	Yes
Calisto	Employed	Yes
Alex	Unemployed	No
Francisco	Unemployed	No
Mario	Unemployed	No
Paulo	Student	No

#### Families

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Relation</b>
Vovò Rainha	Senior citizen (District School area)
Tchavango	Father of young woman interviewed
Vera	Mother-in-law of young woman
Paula	Mother of young woman interviewed
Constancia	Mother of young woman interviewed

Clara	Mother of young woman interviewed
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